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# THE FORTUNE SEEKER.

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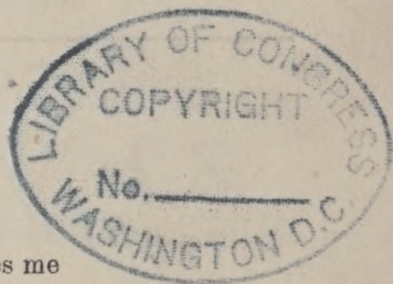
MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE FATAL MARRIAGE," "RETRIBUTION," "THE DESERTED WIFE,"  
"LOST HEIRESS," "DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "WIFE'S VICTORY," "VIVIA,"  
"LADY OF THE ISLE," "HAUNTED HOMESTEAD," "MOTHER-IN-LAW,"  
"THE TWO SISTERS," "THREE BEAUTIES," "CURSE OF CLIFTON,"  
"THE GIPSY'S PROPHECY," "LOVE'S LABOR WON,"  
"THE MISSING BRIDE," "THE BRIDAL EVE,"  
"ALLWORTH ABBEY," "INDIA," ETC.

"This accident and flood of fortune  
So far exceeds all instance, all discourse,  
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes,  
And wrangle with my reason, that persuades me  
To any other trust."—SHAKESPEARE.

"Fortune is merry,  
And in this mood will give us any thing."—IBID.

"Since you will buckle fortune on my back,  
To bear her burden, whether I will or no,  
I must have patience to endure the load."—IBID.



Philadelphia:

T. B. PETERSON & BROTHERS;

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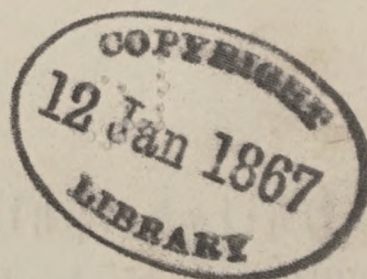
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TO  
MRS. JUDGE JOHN C. UNDERWOOD,  
OF VIRGINIA,  
TRIED AND TRUE,  
IN THE DARKEST DAYS OF HER COUNTRY'S WOE:  
THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,  
WITH THE EARNEST ESTEEM AND AFFECTION  
OF THE AUTHOR.

E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

PROSPECT COTTAGE,  
*March 1st, 1866.*



THE WHITE

TO

MRS. JUDGE JOHN C. UNDERWOOD,

OF VIRGINIA.

THIRTY AND FOUR

IN THE DARKEST PART OF HER JOURNALS SHE

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED

WITH THE kindest esteem and affection

OF THE AUTHOR

JOHN C. UNDERWOOD

THE WHITE

MRS. JUDGE JOHN C. UNDERWOOD



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# THE FORTUNE SEEKER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE EMIGRANT SHIP.

There rolls the deep, where grew the tree,  
Oh earth! what changes thou hast seen!  
There where the long street roars, hath been  
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow  
From form to form, and nothing stands;  
They melt like mists, the solid lands,  
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,  
And dream my dreams and hold it true;  
For though my lips may breathe adieu,  
I cannot think the thing farewell.—*Tennyson.*

It is a scene of vast sublimity and of deep solitude. It is midnight on mid-ocean. Above expands the eternal sky. Below rolls the boundless sea. A single black speck breaks the infinite monotony of the luminous, dark-blue waters. Yet even as our earth rolls, a populous sphere through the immensity of space, so that speck sails, a peopled world, over the loneliness of the midnight sea.

It is the emigrant ship *Star of the West*, and her first, second, and third cabins are all crowded with passengers. Here upon the same decks, under the shelter of the same sails, steered by the same hand, and for the same bourne, are gathered the extremes of human character and condition—of wealth and poverty, of youth and age, of beauty and ugliness, of innocence and crime, of virtue and vice, of prosperity and adversity, of health and sickness, of



enjoyment and suffering, of hope and despair, yes, and even of life and death, of heaven and hell! And the purposes and objects of this mixed crowd of human creatures are as various and opposite as their characters and conditions.

Here, for instance, is a party of wealthy young noblemen, coming over to make a pleasure tour through the world; and there a set of youthful emigrants, sent out by charity to hew for themselves a home in the wilderness of the West.

Here is the prosperous merchant, returning after some highly successful speculation, with the rich fruits of his business talents, to his native home; and there the ruined bankrupt, coming with the fragments of his financial wreck, to reconstruct his fortunes in a foreign land.

Here is the Christlike missionary, after a long life spent in preaching the gospel to the heathen of Farther India, returning to die amid his kindred at home; and next him, unsuspected, the fugitive felon, flying before the avenger of blood, from country, home, and family.

Here was the Godlike philanthropist who only breathed to benefit mankind, and who was even now bound upon some new enterprise of benevolence, and with him, unsuspected, the demoniac gambler, who lived by preying upon his fellow-creatures; and who was bent even now upon some fresh enterprise of destruction.

Here the blessed bride, returning from her wedding tour to her happy home, sits and smiles beside her worshipping bridegroom; while there the broken-hearted widow, leaving her husband's grave in that foreign land to which she had taken him, an invalid, in the vain search of health, and coming to her henceforth desolate hearth, watches and weeps alone.

Here a bevy of gentle sisters of mercy, on their way to nurse the sufferers of a plague-stricken southern city, kneel and pray in their little cabin; while in the next division a troupe of opera-dancers, engaged to open the season at



New York, gather together to discuss their winter prospects.

Beside all these extreme cases of good and evil, there were a multitude of others of every degree between them—passengers who traveled for pleasure, for fashion, or for affection—passengers who were returning from visits to friends in Europe, and passengers who were coming out on visits to relatives in America.

But of the three ranks of voyagers in the first, second, and third cabins, that in the third cabin or steerage contained the greatest amount of the elements of human interest, I had nearly said, of tragic dignity. For here were none of the superficial votaries of wealth, fashion, or pleasure, seeking money, fame, or excitement. Here were crowded together hundreds of poor emigrants, earnest men, women, and even children sent out by the company—the homeless to seek a home, the famishing to seek food, the perishing to seek the means of living—to seek them through toil, danger, and suffering—to seek them in the wilderness of the West, amid wild beasts and wilder men.

But in all this crowd of suffering travelers, the deepest interest seems to gather around one boy; for all the other emigrants are united in family groups, and this one boy is alone; all the others are destined to certain tracts of country in the West, or to certain employments in the East; but this boy has “all the world before him where to choose;” the others are all known to each other, but this boy is known to none. Where he came from, why he is here, and where he is going, are as yet unapparent.

And yet there is no willing mystery about the poor lad—everybody is as welcome to know all about him as he knows about himself, which is, indeed, little enough.

It is now midnight, and the lights are all out and the passengers all retired to their berths—all except one or two whom excitement keeps up. One of these is the solitary boy of the steerage passage. He has walked about in the



confined quarters of the lower deck, unable to look far out at sea, unable to look out anywhere except at a segment of the dark sky, and he is weary of his portion of what to him is a moving prison, and he longs with a boyish longing to get upon the grand upper deck, with nothing but the midnight sea and sky around him. True, he has seen placards up all over the ship to these effects—"Steerage passengers not allowed abaft this." "Steerage passengers not allowed on the main deck." "Steerage passengers not allowed on the upper deck." And he had wondered whether, in the case of total shipwreck, the steerage passengers would be allowed to drown in the same sea with their honors, the aristocracy above, or whether they would not be required to swim off some miles to leeward, and die of exhaustion at a respectful distance.

Three weeks of close confinement in the steerage passengers' quarters of the lower deck had made the boy desperate, and this night, notwithstanding all placards, he resolved to trespass on forbidden ground, and go upon deck to see the open sea and sky, and breathe the fresh air, let the after penalty be what it might. It was very dark, still, and lonely. He passed without challenge up the starboard staircase to the main deck, upon which the saloons of the first and second cabin stood. He passed these, and went up a second flight of stairs, and reached the upper deck, which extended the whole length of the ship, from stem to stern. And oh! the ineffable relief of inhaling the pure, fresh air into hot, dry lungs! it was like cold water to the thirsty stomach.

The brisk breeze met him and welcomed him on deck with a sort of conscious, intentional benevolence. It took hold of him and turned him around, and shook his clothes and fanned his face, and lifted the heavy masses of his black hair, threading their tresses with light fingers, and cooling his fevered head, like a mother's hand, the poor boy thought—an imaginary mother's, for he had never known a real



one, though his favorite hidden enthusiasm was his ideal mother. But this breeze; this pure, fresh, life-giving, loving breeze! how strange that it should ever be thought to change its mood, and become the furious and destroying hurricane! how wonderful that any should believe the same spirit to live in the caressing breeze that brings us new life, and the raging wind that threatens us with death!

So thought the boy, as he gave himself up to the subdued delight of being loved by Nature—of being fondled and petted by her hands in the breeze. And thus far he was right; it was a mother's hand that caressed the lonely orphan boy, for Nature is the universal mother.

The boundless ocean was around him, the infinite heavens above him; what if it was all dark, it was not with the blackness of a closed room, but with the luminous, lovely darkness of the open sea and sky.

The deck was very lonely. In all its length and breadth there were but three persons—the man at the wheel, the officer of the watch, and a passenger, leaning over the bulwarks forward, and gazing out into the night westward. The boy also walked forward, and stood looking toward that unseen land of promise in which he was about to seek his fortune.

"Well, my lad," said the gentleman passenger, approaching the new comer as if desirous of whiling away a few moments in conversation, "we are approaching our bourne! We are within three days' sail of New York."

"I am very glad to hear it, sir."

"Oh!" said the gentleman, apparently startled by the unknown voice, "you are a stranger."

"Sir, my name is Welby Dunbar."

"I think I have not seen you out before, Master Dunbar. Have you been sea-sick during the whole passage, and is this your first appearance on deck?"

"I have not been sick, sir, though this is the first time I have ventured up on deck. For the truth is, sir, that I



am a steerage passenger, and have no right to be here at all; but I was stifled for want of fresh air, and I thought there would be no one up here to take offence at my presence."

"A steerage passenger!" exclaimed the gentleman, recoiling. "You are very crowded down there! Have you any cases of fever?"

"Not a case of sickness of any sort, sir, thanks to the frosty weather."

"You are one of the band of emigrants sent out by the company to settle a tract of country in Nebraska?"

"No sir, I am connected with none of them. I am quite alone."

"What! a boy of twelve years of age, and you cannot be more, going out to America quite alone! What could your parents or guardians be thinking of?" exclaimed the gentleman, in surprise.

"I never had either, sir."

"Never had parents or guardians! Why, where did you spring from?"

"From Westminster, London."

"As bad a place as St. Giles's itself, for all its magnificent abbey! But had you no friends in Westminster, that you must come to seek your fortune in America?" inquired the gentleman, becoming rather interested in the forlorn condition of this poor boy.

"None who were either able or willing to prevent me," replied the lad, who seemed to feel it a great privilege to tell his little story of negations to any sympathizing listener.

"I have never before heard of such a case! Pray, who brought you up?"

"Again, nobody, sir. Who brings up the lost puppies and stray kittens? As far back as I can remember any thing about myself, I was a stray child, sometimes in the arms of one beggar-woman, and sometimes in the hands of



another. Whoever might get hold of me first in the morning, to take me out with her to beg, was my mother for that day."

"I thought begging was not allowed in London?"

"No more it isn't, sir; that is, downright, barefaced begging, isn't; but you know, sir, there is more ways of killing a dog beside choking him with plum-pudding; and my mothers knew all the dodges. One of them had a dodge of holding me out in her arms and looking piteously in the faces of the ladies; and another used to lead me by the hand, and carry a little basket of wild violets, and pray the ladies to buy a bunch for a penny, for the poor child's sake."

"And how old were you then?"

"I don't know, sir, but I must have been as much as three years old, since I remember it so well."

"Boy!"

"Sir?"

"You talk uncommonly well for one raised as you pretend to have been. How is that?"

"I went to the ragged school when it was first opened in our neighborhood, when I was five years old. I attended it regularly up to the time of my leaving England—and that was for seven years."

"My lad, it seems a little queer to me that your long and regular attendance at that school, and your very evident intelligence, had not won so much approbation from the teachers and directors as to induce some of them to put you to some business."

"It did, sir, and they made up a little sum and apprenticed me to a fishmonger in Billingsgate, who kept me all night cleaning fish, and all day long crying them through the streets. I did not mind the hard work, heaven knows, but he would not allow me time to read the books old Moses used to lend me from his second-hand book stall; and oh, sir, I tell you what, hunger for books is just as bad as hun-



ger for bread. So one day I just run away, and tramped down to Liverpool and got aboard this ship; and I am working my passage over."

"It was a bad beginning, my boy, to run away from your master."

"Yes, sir, I know it was; but I did it to seek my own fortune—to seek some employment that would give me food and clothing, and leave me time to read also."

"If your master would not allow you this, you should have complained to the kind friends that paid your apprentice fee and placed you with him."

"Ah, sir, if my master had starved my body, and I had made complaint, I should have had redress, but as he only starved my mind, my complaint would have been dismissed as impertinent; for you see it was thought that I had got all my dues of learning at the ragged school."

"But it seems that the little knowledge you acquired there, only created in you an appetite for more."

"Just so, sir, and not a morsel was given me to satisfy my hunger."

"You thought there was nothing for it but to run away, then?"

"Yes, sir; some, you see, are tempted by money, and some by one thing, and some by another. Now if ever I should be led to commit a sin, it would be to get knowledge."

"The first temptation that ruined mankind! The original sin that brought death into the world! Take care, my boy; you began by committing a fault, mind that you do not end in perpetrating a crime."

"I shall take care, sir."

"What, now, do you expect to do in New York; you, a friendless boy, cast penniless upon a foreign shore?"

"What other poor boys, like me, have done, sir—work myself up."

"Like you! yes, you have evidently strong will, intelli-



gence, and enterprise, and lads like you have worked themselves up, as you call it—some to fortune, and some to—the gallows, boy! So be careful.”

“I shall, sir. I have heard of Girard, your great banker, who was a poor orphan lad like myself, thrown friendless upon your shores, and how *he* worked himself up to fortune, and founded banks and city squares, and above all, a college for the education of poor boys. If I could get into that college now—” said the lad, with an appealing gaze up into the gentleman’s face, which was, however, quite lost in the darkness.

“Your fortune would be made. I have no influence, however, to get you in there, even if you were a candidate, my boy, which you could not become, because you see the Girard College was founded for the benefit of Philadelphia boys only. New York has evening free schools, and libraries, and reading rooms for the benefit of poor boys who have to work all day and wish to improve themselves in the evening. If you are honest and industrious, and very much in earnest, you will attain your object, I hope—that is, if I clearly comprehend what your object really is.”

“It is what I have told your honor—only to earn money in order to get knowledge.”

“And knowledge is the road to power. You are ambitious, my lad! We shall hear of you in the world, some day; but whether as a great financier or a great felon, which is often the same thing, depends upon——”

“Myself,” interrupted the boy.

“Your fate,” solemnly continued the man; “but after all, those two, also, may be but one—yourself may be your fate! But it’s going on toward two bells. I advise you to follow my example—go below and turn in. Good-night, my lad.”

And without another word, the stranger turned and left the deck.

And the adventurous boy—if he had foolishly raised any



air-castle upon the foundation of the stranger's curiosity, rather than interest in him, was destined to see it sink, for the gentleman went below, and merely saying to himself, "What a very forward boy for his age; but I suppose there are hundreds like him, where he came from," dismissed the subject from his mind forever.

The boy left on deck paced up and down for hours longer, unwilling to leave the fresh, brisk, vitalizing air, and the pure, clear, blue darkness of the open sea and sky.

At length, with weary limbs and drowsy brain, though still reluctant spirit, he too left the deck, and went below, to seek his berth in the crowded cabin of the steerage passengers, around which human beings were packed away like bales of goods, on tiers of shelves, or lay extended on mattresses over the floor.

The boy paused beside one mattress upon which a little girl was sleeping beside a coarse woman and rough man. The man and woman were both tall, massive, rugged-looking Hibernians, long past middle age; dark, swarthy, and forbidding in features, expression, and attitude. The child, that might have been their granddaughter, was a pale, thin, fair-haired little creature of perhaps three or four years of age. Her eyelashes were still wet with the tears with which she had wept herself to sleep.

"Poor, dear little Daney, how I wish I might have taken you up on deck, to get a breath of fresh air too! I no more believe that you belong to this uncouth couple than I belonged to my half a dozen mothers of begging memory," said the boy, as he gazed pityingly upon the little sleeper, before climbing up to his own shelf, that was placed quite near the ceiling of the cabin, and fell asleep to dream of Jack the Giant-killer, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London, and other fabulous and historical heroes who had begun life by running away to seek their fortunes, as he was doing.



## CHAPTER II.

## THE FISH BOY'S STRANGE ADVENTURE.

Oh it was pitiful,  
Near a whole city full,  
Home he had none!—*Hood.*

WESTWARD HO! The good ship went on her way, and in due course of time and tide anchored in New York harbor.

The custom-house officers came on board, but their dreaded visit was but a small inconvenience to our boy, who, having at the word of command untied the blue cotton handkerchief that contained all his worldly goods—namely a second shirt and a dog-eared Bible—was suffered to land in peace.

He looked around for little Daney and her father and mother, but they were hopelessly lost in that bewildering crowd that always attends the arrival of one of the ocean steamers. It was a dark night, also, which rendered further search quite hopeless.

So he stepped upon the pier, and turned at a venture up the first street that offered, for one was as good for him as another. This one was lighted with gas, and lined with shops, and crowded with people. It was a busy, gay, exhilarating scene, at least to those who were at home in it. To our boy it was depressing in the extreme. For in all that endless stream of animated faces there was not one that smiled upon him, or even knew him. He was a stranger in a strange land!

Oh! what would he not have given then, if in that large and crowded city some little home had been waiting to welcome him—some kind old aunty or grandmother had been making tea or smoothing a bed for him. But, no—no such comfort awaited him.

He had seen so many of his fellow-passengers welcomed



with joyous ardor by expectant friends, and hurried away to happy homes; but there were none to look for him, none to take him by the hand, none to bid him welcome.

Oh! desolation of desolations; why had he not thought of all this before? Here he was at the goal of his desires; this was the new world; this was New York; but the excitement that had sustained him during the voyage failed him now, through a very natural reaction of the animal spirits, and instead of feeling happy, confident, and elated, he felt lonely, frightened, and despairing. He wished himself back at the ragged school, or with his hard task-master, the fish monger, or with his old companions of the New Cut; and then he remembered that three thousand miles of the "salt sea waves" rolled between him and them, and—the hero of twelve years old, who had come to carve out such a magnificent fortune for himself, sat down under a gas-lamp and wept from homesickness and solitude.

A policeman—that modern providence of the streets—came and asked him what was the matter.

"I have just landed from an emigrant ship, and I have got no friends, and don't know where to go. I wish I was back in Westminster—boo-hoo-woo!"

"Have you got any money?"

"Yes, sir—a shilling."

"That's a fortune to commence business with in New York! You see that house at the corner there?" said the policeman, pointing to a tall, old, red, brick building, the ground-floor of which seemed to be occupied as a shop.

"Yes, sir."

"Go there, and you'll get lodging and supper both for a shilling, and—to-morrow's a new day, you know, and may bring you luck."

"Yes, sir," answered the boy, drying his eyes, and feeling a strong impulse to embrace his new acquaintance and swear eternal friendship with him, but the officer had walked off toward the other extremity of his beat. The boy picked



up his light bundle and crossed the street to the house pointed out to him, and when he reached it, found that the lower shop was occupied by a fish and oyster vender. And so quickly does the mood of childhood change, he laughed aloud at the thought that passed through his mind as he entered.

"I ran away from a fishmonger in London, and sailed three thousand miles to fetch up at last with a fishmonger in New York!"

"What do you want, boy?" inquired a short, stout, black-haired man, in a white apron, who stood behind a barrel of oysters, engaged in opening a specimen one for a customer.

"Can I lodge here?"

The man jerked his oyster knife over his right shoulder, thereby indicating a flight of steps, ascending from the back of the shop to the unknown regions above. The boy followed the index, and found himself in a large upper room, furnished with benches around the walls, and half filled with those street ministers of the head and feet, the news-boys and boot-blacks. They were a free, merry, noisy set—some engaged in drinking coffee, which was dispensed from behind a large table in the corner by a fat, motherly looking woman—and some in reading the papers—and some in discussing the politics, literature, or drama of the day.

Our boy went up to the counter and got a cup of coffee, a sausage, and a roll, for which he paid a sixpence, and then again put the inquiry whether he could have a lodging.

The woman, who might have been the twin sister of the man below, and who was engaged in cutting bread, twitched her knife over her shoulder, indicating a second flight of stairs, leading from the back of the room, higher.

Our boy, following *this* index also, landed in an upper chamber, of a size and appearance corresponding with the room below, but having the broad benches that ran around the walls covered with mattresses and blankets. In the corner of the room there was an iron stove containing a



good fire. An old man, the sole occupant of the place, sat dozing in an arm-chair near it. Upon paying another sixpence to this functionary, our adventurer was told that he might take his choice of the luxurious couches spread before him, which he accordingly did.

And though his last penny was spent, and he had but this one night between himself and possible starvation from cold, hunger, and exposure on the morrow—though he was now literally a homeless, friendless, and penniless stranger in a strange land, he felt so comforted by the transient blessings of food, warmth, and shelter, that he lay down and slept the sound sleep of careless childhood, unmindful of the future. He was not even awakened by the coming in of his vagrant fellow-lodgers.

Morning dawned before he opened his eyes and remembered where he was, or that he had not even a penny to pay for the breakfast that his vigorous young appetite already craved. His companions of the preceeding night had already risen, breakfasted, and departed. He too arose, washed his face at the water spout, and dried it with the roller towel that served all the inmates of the chamber.

Then he went to the room below, where he found the fat woman still dispensing coffee, muffins, and chops, as if she had never gone to bed at all. The smell of all this was very appetizing. Our boy was excessively hungry. And what boy ever hesitated between a garment and a meal? A girl might do so; a boy never!

Marching up to the counter, he boldly offered the woman his bundle in pledge of future payment for his breakfast.

She was too habituated to treat with customers "hard up for the ready" to express the least surprise at this proposal. Coolly receiving the offered security, she helped the boy to a cup of coffee, a muffin, and a mutton chop. At another time she might not have cared to converse with a customer. But now she was especially idle, and there was, beside, something about this fine, tall, black-eyed and black-



haired youth that was rather attractive. So while the hungry lad stood there discussing his breakfast, she entered into conversation with him, and in the course of a few minutes, had learned almost as much of his history as is known to the reader.

"Oh, then if you were 'prenticed to a London fishmonger, and understand crying fish or oysters and that, you needn't go any further to look for a place. My brother down stairs wants several more boys to take out fish early in the morning, and oysters in the evening," said the woman, when he had finished his account of himself.

The boy looked up at her. It was very provoking to have run away from a fishmonger in London, only to fall into the hands of another fishmonger in New York. But hunger and cold in midwinter are horrible tyrants, who will not permit their demands to be put off for a day. And so, with a smile at the ludicrousness of the whole affair, and a wise reflection to the effect that no man (or boy) can escape his fate, our hero yielded to his destiny.

And that same day found him crying "Fine, fresh oysters" through the streets of the city.

He rather liked his new master and mistress, and he decidedly took to the old man, their father, who had charge of the boys' sleeping room. And he liked the newsboys who congregated there every night, with their intelligence, merriment, and gossip; their independence, self-esteem, and confident criticisms on art, literature, and politics, and all the grand topics of the day.

And all things considered, our hero might have been contented, only—to cry fish and oysters through the streets of the city had certainly not been his object in coming to the new world. Since leaving the ship, he had never once chanced to meet one of his fellow-passengers. They seemed all to have been scattered to the four winds of heaven, for all that he ever saw or heard of them again. But in his secret heart he grieved for little Daney, his baby shipmate



and only friend on the passage. And as he walked through the streets crying his oysters, he peered at every little child that bore the slightest resemblance to her, in the faint hope of finding her. He often followed some tall, dark, uncouth-looking man or woman in the vain expectation of overtaking her father or mother, and discovering what had become of her. That which we seek at a distance, is often very close, too close to us to be found.

One day he had been crying oysters all day long, and late in the afternoon turned into his own street to go home, when, at the low door of a tenement house on the same side of the way, he saw little Daney sitting on the step.

With a quick, breathless, gasping cry of joy, peculiar to herself, she sprang up and toddled toward him. Dropping his empty bucket, and throwing up his hands, he ran forward to meet her, caught her up in his arms, and covered her with kisses. There was something deeply affecting in this poor forlorn boy's love for that little child. But the human heart must cling to something. His clung to the baby. He learned from her broken talk that her father and mother lived in that house. A little later, he discovered that they went out only by night, lurking in the upper rooms of the house all day.

The fish boy was almost happy now, he had something to care for. He spent his leisure time and spare money, that should both have been bestowed upon books, according to the original programme, all on Daney. He played with her, romped with her, walked with her, and fed her with oysters, clams, and all the best dainties of his master's shop. And there is no doubt in the world, that if this had continued, all his ambitious prospects for the acquisition of knowledge must have fallen through. And as Marc Antony lost the world for a woman, Welby Dunbar must have lost it for a child. It is quite certain that the whole destiny of this boy was changed by the sudden disappearance of Daney. Poor Welby went to seek her one evening when he had



done his work, and was told by the other lodgers in the house that Drury and his wife, with little Daney, had gone—no one could tell where.

This was a great blow to the boy. All he loved in the world had vanished. For a moment he reeled under the shock; but soon rallied with the hope of finding her again speedily. And from that day, there was not a more industrious oyster-carrier than himself; and why? because the more streets he traversed, the greater hope of finding Daney.

But days and weeks passed, and still his little blossom was missing.

One day, near evening, he was crying oysters in a street near Broadway, when suddenly:

"There he is now!" exclaimed a respectable, middle-aged, clerical-looking gentleman, who was walking down the street with two other elderly, professor-like men.

"Oh! the young rascal, to have no more regard for his mother's feelings," said the second man.

"Thank heaven we have found him at last, however," answered the third.

"*Here's your fine, fresh oysters!*" bawled the boy, without the remotest idea that the conversation of these fatherly old gentlemen referred to him.

"Stop that nonsense, sir. Are you not ashamed of yourself, pray?" said the clergyman, sternly, as he laid his hand upon the boy's shoulder.

"I am only crying oysters, sir! I am doing no harm, sir!" answered Welby, in surprise.

"No harm, Master Greville! do you call it no harm to disgrace your friends in this shameless manner?" said the first professor, severely.

"What could have tempted you to such an extraordinary step?" demanded the second professor.

"You have nearly broken the heart of your mother!" said the clergyman.



"Your friends have all been in the utmost distress about you!" added the first professor.

"Such conduct deserves the severest chastisement," said the second professor, or, as we shall hereafter call him for distinction sake, the schoolmaster.

"But I was only crying oysters!" pleaded the bewildered boy.

"Only crying oysters, you irreclaimable scamp! And is crying oysters a proper business for a young gentleman of your position? Shame on you, sir!"

The boy looked from one to the other in the utmost perplexity. They did not look like lunatics, nor like men who were playing a joke—those three stern old gentlemen. The eldest was a short, stout, bald-headed man in a clerical suit of jet black. The other two were tall, thin, grey-haired men, with the unmistakable air of pedagogues. There was no doubt that the eldest was a clergyman, and the others professors in some school or college for young gentlemen.

"Pray, why did you disgrace yourself, your friends, and our establishment, by running away from us, Master Greville?" severely demanded the clergyman.

"I never ran away from you, and never saw either of you before in all my life; and my name is not Master Greville, nor Master Anybody else! And I think you are all crazy together, old gents, begging your pardon!" exclaimed the provoked boy.

"Oh, the shameless young reprobate! he pretends not to know us! Do you think sir, that your ragamuffin disguise can hide you from us!"

"I tell you what, my jolly governors, you have all been drinking," said the boy, and picking up his bucket, he walked on, singing:

*"Here-ere-'s your fine, fresh oysters!"*

But he was overtaken and stopped in a moment, and this time by a policeman, whom the clergyman had called, and to whom he said:



"This is Master Fulke Greville, who ran away from my establishment last month. Call a carriage; we wish to take him immediately to the home of his stepmother, Mrs. Courtney Greville, of Madison Avenue."

The policeman started on his errand.

Our hero struggled valiantly in the hands of his captors. The three old gentleman had enough to do to hold him until the carriage came up.

Meanwhile a gaping crowd had gathered.

"Come, Master Greville, your frolic is quite over; you have had enough of it, one would think! Get in and come home to your mamma," said the clergyman, who, with his two companions, endeavored to force the fish boy into the carriage. But the latter stoutly resisted, saying:

"I won't, I tell you! Leave me be this minute! *This* a free country! I wish I was back to Old England——"

"Master Greville——"

"I'm no Master Greville, I keep telling you, nor Master Anybody else!"

"If you have no respect for yourself, think of your mother!"

"I've no mother, I tell you! Let me go, I say! I'll take the law of you all—I'll——" cried the lad, violently resisting all endeavors to force him into the carriage.

Here the gathering crowd closed around the group. One voice, that of a newsboy, arose, exclaiming:

"Oh, I say, fellows! Here's a young gent on a lark, been and broke school, and been a play acting at carrying out of oysters for old Carnes at Waterside. I seen him there! Hooray for him!"

"Hooray for him! Go it, governor! go it, oysterman!" echoed the crowd of boys, as the old clergyman and the lad struggled together—the one to gain his freedom, the other to force his captive into the carriage. Other policemen gathered to the scene of combat, for such it now really became.

"Officers, my name is Dornton; I am the principal of



the Bancroft Collegiate School for young gentlemen. This boy is one of my pupils, Master Fulke Greville, the stepson of Mrs. Greville, of Madison Square, of whom you have all heard. He ran away from school a few weeks ago, and has been since that time apparently masquerading as oyster carrier. I claim your assistance to restore him to his mother," said the clergyman, desisting in his efforts to control the athletic lad.

"Come, young gentleman, you had better go quietly with your friends. What can a young gent like you see in the oyster line o' business, to forsake all else and follow it?" said a jocose policeman, taking hold of the boy's arm, and urging him toward the carriage door.

"Leave me be, I say! You are all mad together, I believe! I am no Master Greville! I've no mamma! I never saw the Reverend Mr. Dornton in my life before! I never even heard of the Collegiate School for young gentlemen, nor Madison Square either! Leave me be, or I'll black some of your eyes!" cried the boy, fighting like a hero.

"Go it, governor! Go it, youngster!" cried the amazed crowd.

"I'll back the governor for half a dollar," said one.

"And I the boy, for the same sum," answered another.

A ring was quickly formed around the group.

But in the midst of it all the boy was overmastered and forced into the carriage, followed by the three elderly gentlemen. The policeman opened the crowd, and the order was given for the carriage to be driven to number blank, Madison Square.

"How could you have given us so much trouble, Master Greville?" inquired the old clergyman, as soon as the door was fastened securely and the wheels were in motion.

But the boy did not answer. He sunk back in his seat, stuck out his upper lip, kicked his heels against the boards, and remained in sullen, offended silence.

"I ask you, sir, why is it that you have given us so much trouble?" again inquired his mentor.



"What's the use of my answering of you any thing? What's the use of my talking to lunatics? for you are all lunny together! And your perlice aint worth a ha'penny! to let a harmless lad be tuk up and hauled off in this way, and all for nothink!" sulkily answered the boy.

"You will see who is mad and who is sane presently, sir; nor can you hope to deceive us by your assumption of vulgar slang," said Mr. Dornton.

"Well, if you are not mad, you are worse! If you've tuk me up, knowing of what you're a doing of, so much the worse for you! It is a case of kidnapping, so it is! And you mean to black my face, and crimp my hair, and make a negro slave of me, perhaps, because I am a poor, friendless lad, with no one to look after me! But I'm a free-born British subject for all that! and I'll lay the case before the British consul, so I will! Mind! I've warned you!"

"Lord bless my soul, how he keeps it up! A good actor has been lost to the world by this boy being born to a fortune! One would really think he believed what he said!" observed the professor.

"Oh, yes! he has genius! He was noted at school for being the best actor in the Thespian corps," remarked the schoolmaster.

"And the most highly gifted boys are too often, alas! the most hopelessly reprobate!" commented the clergyman, with a sigh.

The subject of this conversation looked from one to the other of the speakers in utter bewilderment, thinking to himself: "My eye! if these old gents don't talk as if they meant it! Well! either they be mad, or I be dreaming of the queerest dream as ever was!" but instead of speaking out these words, he relapsed into sullen silence, until the carriage drew up before one of the lofty mansions of Madison Square.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE FISH BOY'S PALACE.

A palace beautiful to see;  
Marble-porched and cedar chambered,  
Hung with damask drapery;  
Bossed with ornaments of silver,  
Interlaid with gems and gold,  
Filled with carvings from cathedrals,  
Rescued in the days of old;  
Eloquent with books and pictures,  
All that luxury could afford;  
Warmed with statues that Pygmalion  
Might have fashioned—and adored.—*Mackay.*

It was a fine, double-fronted, four-storied brown-stone building, with rows of plate-glass windows, wrought-iron balconies, and all other external signs of wealth, taste, and refinement. The gaslight over the transom above the street door, revealed a stately entrance. And to the right of this, through the half-closed shutters of two lofty windows, the glow of light through gold-colored curtains, showed the warmth and comfort of the drawing-room.

By the time the boy had made these observations through the window of the carriage, the door was opened, and the steps let down.

The old clergyman alighted and stood blocking the way, until the professor and the schoolmaster handed out the boy, keeping hold of him, lest he should bolt again. The carriage was paid and dismissed, and while it rolled away, the boy was led between the clergyman and the professor, the schoolmaster following, up the marble steps to the stately portals.

“Oh, see here now! I say! this is getting beyond a joke, you know! Let me go, governor!” cried the boy, apparently frightened by the grandeur around him.

But at this moment the door was opened by a footman in livery, who, seeing the party, exclaimed quite involuntarily:



"Master Fulke! and in that dress! Oh! I beg your pardon, Mr. Dornton, but it was such an astonishment."

"I can quite understand that, Benjamin. Let your mistress know that we have brought Master Greville home, and are waiting to see her."

"Yes, sir! sit down, sir." And the footman offered chairs in the spacious entrance hall, while he opened the door on the right, and entered a parlor to do his errand.

"You see, even Benjamin recognized you, sir, in your disguise!" said Mr. Dornton.

"Yes! he is another lunatic! Now I tell you all what! You've been and caught the wrong fish! and you'd better throw me back in the water again! I am not a trout, my masters—I am nothing but a dog-fish," said the boy.

"Be silent, sir, and respect, at least, your mother's house!" said the clergyman.

"And if you do not, it will certainly be the worse for you," continued the professor.

"Your only chance of escaping condign punishment is putting yourself upon your best behavior," added the schoolmaster.

"Very well! I've warned you all! You are keeping a free-born boy here against his will. It is kidnapping! It is false imprisonment! It is felony! And I'm blowed if I'll stand it."

Before either of his captors could answer this speech, the footman reappeared, and reported:

"Mrs. Greville begs that you will walk in the parlor, and she will be with you in a moment."

And he opened the door on the right, and ushered the party into an elegant little reception-room, the window-curtains, and chair and sofa covers of which, were of gold-colored satin damask. The walls were enriched with choice pictures; the marble-topped tables were laden with beautifully bound books; the mantle-shelf was surmounted with a broad mirror, and adorned with vases of rare exotics. A grand piano stood in one corner of the room, a harp in



another, a guitar in a third, and a cabinet of fine shells, corals, and minerals in a fourth. A beautiful chandelier, formed of lilies of mother-of-pearl and leaves of malachite, hung from the centre of the ceiling, illumined the whole scene.

It was but the ordinary sitting-room of a woman of moderate fortune and cultivated tastes, yet, to the unaccustomed eye of the fish boy, it seemed a miracle of luxury and elegance—a scene of fairy-land and enchantment. In gazing around, he forgot, for a moment, his own personal fears and cares; and while he was wondering what could possibly be the contents of such very elegant books, and where such lovely flowers could have grown, and how people dared to walk on such a splendid carpet, or sit down on such superb sofas, the door opened, and a lady entered.

A queen she seemed! tall and nobly formed, with a stately and graceful mien, a proud head, that sat rather back upon her shoulders, giving her a natural air of haughtiness, fine Grecian features, a marble-like complexion, large, full, clear blue eyes, and auburn hair, inclining to red, bright as sunshine, that dropped in glittering ringlets upon her fair, round, well-turned neck and bosom. A blue moiré dress fell in ample folds, and flowed in undulating grace around this queenly figure.

She advanced up the room, bowing in turn to her visitors, until her eye fell upon the awe-stricken visage of the poor young ragamuffin, when all her dignified self-possession gave way, and, with a smothered cry, she hastened toward him, clasped him in her arms, and burst into a passion of tears—genuine tears, that welled up from the bottom of her heart—plentiful tears, that fell in showers over the fish boy. This ragged form was embraced by her fair arms, his rough head pillowed upon her soft bosom, and veiled by her splendid ringlets, and his sunburnt face covered with her warm kisses, while, with loving inconsistency, she poured upon him epithets of endearment and words of reproach.



"Oh, Fulke, my dear, dear boy, how could you be so very wicked? Oh, my darling, what a figure you have made of yourself! How could you break my poor heart so? But if I forgive you this time, you will never go away again, will you, dear? No, I am sure you will not. It was only a freak—a *lark*, as you wild boys call it! And my son did not remember, that what was 'sport to him, was death to his poor mother,'" etc., etc., etc., she continued through at least an hour of sobs, and tears, and caresses.

"Another lunatic," thought the fish boy; "but my eye! what a nice mad woman this one is, to be sure; I don't object to *her* one bit! only I *should* like to know what all the row is about!"

At length, when this lady, much to the detriment of her elegant toilet, had hugged, and kissed, and cried over the fish boy to her heart's content, she suddenly ceased, stood up, resumed her queenly dignity, and turning to her visitors, said:

"I can never sufficiently thank you, gentlemen, for the zeal, discretion, and great delicacy with which you have prosecuted this search—a search rendered doubly difficult by my refusal to advertise; but I could not bear to have my son's boyish freak exposed in that way. Again, I thank you."

The gentlemen bowed in return.

"And now may I ask you where you found the unfortunate boy?" she inquired.

"Crying oysters, madam, in Canal street," answered Mr. Dornton.

The lady was betrayed into an involuntary start of horror.

But without regarding that, the clergyman proceeded to detail all the circumstances connected with the arrest of the fish boy.

The lady turned a melancholy glance upon the supposed delinquent, but forbore all reproaches.

And soon after, the three visitors arose to depart. They took a respectful leave of Mrs. Greville, and then went to shake hands with their late captive.



"Good evening, Master Greville! We hope to see you at school again, after the Christmas holidays," said the clergyman.

"When all that is disagreeable to be remembered shall be forgotten," added the professor.

"And it will depend upon yourself whether you are happy with us or not," concluded the schoolmaster.

And with three more deep bows to the lady of the house, they withdrew.

"And now, my darling, that they are gone, and we are quite alone, tell me why you left the school where I placed you?" said the lady, affectionately putting her white and jewelled hand upon his rough head.

But the fish boy did not reply.

"If you have received just cause for dissatisfaction, would it not have been better to have remained for a few days longer, until my return from Europe, which you know was hourly expected? But let that pass. And now that we have met, tell me, tell your mother, all about it!"

"My lady, you are not my mother, no more nor the Queen o' Sheba is!" said the fish boy, sorrowfully.

"Oh, Fulke! Fulke! ungrateful boy! how can you speak to me in that cruel way?" said the lady, with tears in her eyes.

"How can I help it? It's the truth, my lady! you are not my mother! I wish you was!"

"Wish I was? Well, I *am*, Fulke! that is, I am all the same. And I am sure I have never let you know the difference. Have I now, Fulke?"

The fish boy was so touched by her plaintive voice and tender look, that he answered evasively, and referring only to the present time:

"I know you *try* to be a mother to me, my lady!"

"Yes! do I not, boy? But leave off calling me my lady, you absurd fellow! Where ever did you pick up such a habit? Yes, Fulke, ever since I married your father, when



you were but three years old, I have taken you to my heart of hearts, and cherished you, even as my own child. Didn't you and Lois share one nursery, one school-room? Were not you and she like the truest brother and sister, although you were the son of Mr. Greville's first wife, and she the daughter of my first husband? It used to delight us both to see how fond you were of each other in those childish days, before it became necessary to send you to separate schools. Oh, Fulke, don't you often think of those happy days of infancy?"

The fish boy did not reply. He was thinking of the days of his infancy indeed, an infancy passed first in the arms of the tramps and beggars of Westminster, and afterward sustained by the crusts and bones thrown to him, as to a little stray dog, by his poor neighbors.

"And in all those days, Fulke, do you remember one single instance in which I treated my own child better than you?"

The fish boy did not remember any thing about the matter, and he said so.

"And after your poor father died, did I not continue to treat his orphan son with as much tenderness as I gave to my own daughter? You know I did!"

The fish boy could not deny it, since he knew nothing about it, and the lady continued:

"And when, a year ago, my failing health rendered it necessary for me to relieve myself of all family cares and go to Europe, did I not wish to take you and my daughter with me? But your guardian, Mr. Courtney, objected to your leaving the United States, and requested that you might remain at school? And then, when I placed you at the Collegiate School, did I not give up the idea of taking my own daughter with me, who would have been a great comfort to me indeed, and did I not place her at a ladies' boarding-school here, so that she could be near you, and see you often? And, oh, Fulke, what could a mother do for a son more than that?"



"Nothink," answered the fish boy, with tears in his eyes—tears called up by the recollection that he had no mother to do any thing for him.

"Then, my dear, dear boy, why did you wound me by saying I am not your own mamma, only your step-mother?"

"My lady, you mistake! I never said as how you were my step-mother. 'Cause you're nyther my mother, nor yet my step-mother. I wish to the great goodness alive as how you was! Boo-hoo-oo," blubbered the fish boy, grinding his greasy cuffs into his overflowing eyes.

These words were so smothered and drowned in sobs and tears, that their meaning scarcely reached the lady's sense. She drew his hands away from his tear-stained face, and said:

"There, do not cry; I did not mean to hurt your feelings. But do not ever leave me again, my dear, dear boy! Oh! think what an event to meet me on my return to my native shores! I, all eagerness to see you and your sister, called at your school before coming to my own house, and there, to my astonishment and terror, was met with the news that you had eloped! Between that time and this, I thought I should have died of fright and anxiety and suspense! But there, all is over now, and all forgiven! Only, for my peace, promise you will never leave me again without my consent, Fulke, at least while you are a minor. Promise your mother."

"My lady, I would promise you any think in the world to please you; but one little word more! It's no use to argue with—lunatics—begging your pardon—so I shall say but this: By-and-by, when you find out the truth, don't go for to call me an impostor."

"We will drop the subject, if you please, Fulke; here is Lois."

At this moment a door opened and—oh! such a vision of loveliness dawned upon the fish boy.



## CHAPTER IV.

LOIS HOWARD.

A laughing light—a tender grace  
Sparkle in beauty round her face;  
And her step is as light as the breezy air  
When it bends the morning flowers so fair.—*Carlton.*

THE young lady who now entered was a little beauty, of about his own age, with a graceful, fragile, fairy-like form, dressed in white tarleton, that floated around her like a mist, as she moved. She was as fair as her mother, with a brilliant bloom on her cheeks and lips, and a merry, dancing light in her starry, hazel eyes. Her hair was bright auburn, with golden gleams, and fell in spiral ringlets all around her glowing face. She came in, dancing.

“Here is your brother come back to us, Lois,” said the lady.

She danced up to the fish boy, exclaiming:

“Oh, Fulke! I am so glad to see you!” but when quite near, and on the point of embracing him, she shrunk back with every symptom of disgust, exclaiming:

“Faugh! phew! Oh, you shocking, naughty boy! what ever have you been doing with yourself? What a figure you are! Where ever have you come from?”

“Is that the way in which to meet your poor brother, Miss Howard? Remember the parable of the Prodigal Son, and be ashamed of yourself!” said Mrs. Greville, severely.

“But la, mamma! if the prodigal son had come home in such a plight as that, I doubt whether his father would have fallen on his neck, at least until he had had a bath and a change of clothes!” replied the laughing girl.

“I was not afraid of his contact, Miss.”

“No, mamma dear, but just see the consequences! Your beautiful new moiré all spotted and greased, and ugh! I declare, smelling quite fishy!”



"You are a spoiled child, Lois, but you mean no harm! Don't mind her, Fulke! You know her of old!"

("I'm blowed if I do!" thought the fish boy to himself, who, having quite determined to make no more useless denials, but take his fate as he found it, remained silent.)

"——Though in the matter of the bath and change of clothes, I think her suggestions worthy of immediate attention, my dear!" continued Mrs. Greville. "Your trunks were sent home when the school broke up for the Christmas holidays, and they have been placed in your room—not your old room——"

("No, I should think not," thought the boy.)

——"But in a much larger and pleasanter apartment. I think you had better go and attend to your toilet at once. Yet stay—I will ring for a servant to show you up stairs," concluded the lady, touching the bell-pull.

A smart mulatto boy answered the summons, to whom the lady said:

"Romy, go and attend Master Greville to his apartment, and prepare his bath."

And as the fish boy, with a sigh, arose to follow his guide, she said to him:

"Fulke, you will find us here when you return, and supper will be served at nine."

"Yes, my lady," submissively replied the boy.

"Ridiculous! Why do you persist in giving me such an absurd title?"

"What ought I to call your ladyship, then?"

"Why, you preposterous imp! call me what you have always called me—what Lois calls me—mamma."

"Yes, mamma," answered the fish boy, as he left the room.

"Now, is it not provoking, Lois? Here that boy has been masquerading as an oyster carrier in the service of some low fish and oyster man on Water street, for a month past, and really has picked up so much of the air and the



slang of that sort of people, that it seems to me he cannot leave them off!" said the lady, as soon as the fish boy was out of sight. "Or else," she added, "he is purposely playing a part, for he has been going on in that way ever since he was discovered."

"I think, mamma, a good, sound, old-fashioned caning would be of immense benefit to him; it would bring him to his senses!"

"Lois, if he were my own son, I should be tempted to request Mr. Dornton to administer that caning; but my step-son—never!"

While this conversation was going on between the mother and daughter, the fish boy followed his guide out into the brilliantly lighted hall, and up the grand marble staircase, and through a back passage-way into a spacious bath-room.

"Glad to see you back, Marse Greville, sir," said the negro, as he busied himself turning on the water and laying out towels.

"Are you dead sure my name is Greville?" inquired the boy.

"He, he, he! La, Marse Greville, how funny you is! What for shouldn't it be Greville?"

"I'm sure I don't know. What is your own?"

"La now, Marse Greville, what you make game long o' me for? Sartain my name what it always wur. Who gwine for to change it?"

"And what is that?"

"La, young marse, you know!"

"Blowed if I do! What is it?"

"Get along wid you, Marse Fulke, making a fool of a poor boy! You know well 'nuff my name, given me by my sponsors in baptism, is Romeo Montague."

"Well, Mr. Mt. Ague, as the bath seems ready, you can take yourself off."

"Ring when you want me, sah?"

"Oh, in course! just so"



Half an hour later, when the fish boy did ring for his newly-appointed servant, Romy entered with clean linen, embroidered slippers, and a brocade dressing-gown.

"My eyes!" exclaimed the fish boy, as he surveyed these splendors.

"You'll please to put these on, sah, and then I'll show you to your new room," said Romeo.

The dazzled boy arrayed himself, and followed his guide to a superbly furnished and brilliantly lighted front chamber, where a young gentleman's elegant evening suit lay upon the bed, and a costly dressing-case stood open upon the bureau.

The fish boy, or Welby Dunbar, as we had best call him since he cast his shell and emerged such a brilliant butterfly, went up to the bureau, carefully brushed his really fine black hair, liberally anointed it from a cut-glass bottle of Macassar, and arranged it with some natural good taste. Then he arrayed himself in his evening-suit, surveyed his person in the glass, and finally received from the hands of his attendant a pair of new gloves and a perfumed pocket handkerchief.

"And now what time is it, Mr. Mt. Ague?"

"Half-past eight, sah. Supper on de table at nine, sah."

"All right! but will all this change back again when the clock strikes twelve?"

"Sah!"

"Blowed if I don't feel like a male Cinderella, as if I should have to cut it for old Carnes's oyster shop, at about half-past eleven, for fear of being metamorphosed back again into a ragamuffin at twelve."

"La, Marse Greville, how funny you do talk, to be sure!"

"Well, Mr. Mt. Ague, I'll go down and join my lady mamma and my young lady sister! And if this aint the rummest go as ever was my name is not Welby!"

Romeo preceded him down stairs, and opened the little



drawing-room door, where he found Mrs. Greville and Miss Howard awaiting him. Mrs. Greville had been obliged to change her dress, and now appeared in a delicate mauve crêpe. A tall and elegant looking man of middle age, fair complexion, light hair, and light gray eyes, was with them. This gentleman immediately arose and held out his hand to the new-comer, saying:

“Fulke, my dear boy, I am very glad to see you home again. We have been intensely anxious on your account. Mr. Dornton was good enough to call in to-night and let me know that you were found, and also that all was to be forgiven on condition of your never repeating the offence. So let us shake hands upon it.”

“Go it, old fellow! Keep the ball moving—nothing like it!” thought Welby; but he said merely:

“Thank you, sir!”

Lois also sprang up and ran and embraced him, saying:

“I’ll kiss you now, Fulke, to make up for my rude reception of you this evening; but really, you know! you were such a figure!”

“And now let us go to supper. Give me your arm, Fulke! Mr. Courtney, will you lead my daughter?” said Mrs. Greville.

They thus passed into a lofty dining-room, whose walls were covered by choice paintings, and whose centre was occupied by an elegant supper-table.

But what attracted and rivetted the gaze of Welby was—a full-length portrait of himself, hanging between the two front windows! Yes, there he was! The same tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, round-limbed, athletic form; the same well-turned neck and stately head; the same regular features, full, black eyes, straight, black eyebrows, and curling black hair; the same character and expression of countenance; the very same smile; yes, even the same little black mole on the right side of the short upper lip! Wonderful! the likeness was perfect from its general aspect down to its smallest details.



This was the most mysterious part of the whole affair! But for this he might have supposed himself the subject of some practical joke enacted for the benefit of his betters! But here was his portrait!

What could it all mean? Was this a case of mistaken identity? And was that the portrait of his counterpart, his fac-simile, his double? And was he himself honestly taken for the runaway young heir of the house? Well, if so, he could not help it, that was certain. He was already weary with fruitless denial that he was any such person, and vain assertions that he was himself. He could not prove his identity; the ship that had brought him over had sailed again; the companions of his voyage were dispersed; and no one else knew any thing of him previous to the day of his first appearance on Water street, which happened also to be the same upon which he was accused of having, as Master Fulke Greville, run away from the Collegiate School.

On the one hand he could not prove that he was Welby Dunbar.

On the other hand every one who now saw him was ready to swear that he was Master Fulke Greville!

What was to be done? Why, evidently nothing but submit to his fate; take the goods the gods provided; and bend to the burden of "greatness thrust upon" him.

But he had no time to speculate farther; he was called to take his place at the table, where a sumptuous supper was spread. Like all poor boys in good health, Welby rejoiced in an amazing appetite. He ate straight through the bill of fare, doing ample justice to every dish.

His *soi-disant* sister's eyes grew saucer-like in their expansion at the heterogeneous viands he devoured—fish, flesh, and fowl; pastry, puddings, and jellies; preserves, pickles, and salads; olives, cheese, and walnuts—nothing came amiss. But what will not the stomach of a boy amalgamate and digest?



At length they left the table and returned to the little drawing-room, or parlor, as it was often called.

Lois, at her mamma's desire, sat down at the piano to play.

Welby, being greatly refreshed and comforted, felt his spirits rise wonderfully. He even followed Mr. Courtney's example, and went and stood beside the musician.

"She shall give you your favorite, my dear boy! Lois, sing that song he loves so well," said Mrs. Greville.

"Dashed if I know what my favorite is, unless it is the 'Perfect Cure,'" thought Welby.

But the young lady played a mournful yet inspiring prelude, and then, amid the low murmuring as of the approaching tempest, her voice rose slowly with the first lines of Longfellow's glorious "Excelsior," as set to music by Helen Lindsay. The singer had a fresh, clear, elastic voice, well suited to the music.

The boy listened, his nerves tingled, his heart beat, his eyes filled; he became rapt, inspired, transported; for some moments he experienced those heroic yearnings common to all noble souls. And then, by a natural consequence, these exalted sentiments were mingled with admiration for the beautiful singer who had excited them. Lois finished her song, yet continued for a few seconds, abstractedly calling forth a few dying notes from the instrument, and then ceased entirely.

"That will do; we wish to hear nothing after 'Excelsior;' leave us with the impression that has made," said Mrs. Greville, in a low voice.

Lois closed the piano; Mr. Courtney arose and took leave, and soon after the family separated for the night. Mrs. Greville and Lois both kissed their "returned prodigal," as they called Welby, and dismissed him to seek repose.

He went up stairs to his handsome chamber, locked the door on the inside, and being very tired, undressed and got into his luxurious bed. But he was far too much excited



to sleep. He had left the gas burning, and now lay surveying by its brilliant light the magnificence that surrounded him—the frescoed ceiling, the stuccoed walls, and the medallion carpet of his room; the green and gold satin damask window hangings sweeping in heavy folds from the ceiling to the floors; the handsome, full-length mirror swinging between them; the rosewood and marble-topped bureau and dressing-table; the rosewood wardrobe, with its mirrored doors; the couch and the arm-chair covered with green and gold satin damask to match the window hangings; and the numerous little accessories of comfort, convenience, and luxury scattered through the apartment, from the ormolu clock on the mantel-piece to the moss foot-cushion on the floor.

Then his thoughts flew back to the poor, bare room at Carnes's, of which he had only the privilege of his own length on one of the wooden benches as a couch.

What magic had brought about this sudden incredible change in his fortunes? He could not answer this question with any degree of satisfaction. Of one thing only he was certain, that he had been no party to this arrangement; that he had resisted it as much as possible until he found all resistance vain.

He could not even surmise how long this wondrous change might last, or if it might not be as short as it had been sudden. But short or long he determined that he would industriously “make hay while the sun shone.” He would read as many books and acquire as much knowledge as he possibly could while in this house of leisure and abundance. He would go to school anywhere that his self-styled mother pleased to send him, and study hard while the opportunity of doing so should be granted him. He would save up all the pocket money they might give him, as a little fund in case of another change of fortune, and if that change should come suddenly, and they should find out they had deceived themselves, why, he would re-



mind them that he had never deceived them, and so appeal to their sense of justice and kindness, not only for pardon for the past but aid for the future, to continue his education.

In the midst of these cogitations he fell asleep, and passed in fancy at once to the news-boys' domicile at Carnes's.

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## CHAPTER V.

### FARTHER ADVENTURES OF THE FISH BOY.

Be not afraid of greatness.  
Some are born great;  
Some achieve greatness; and,  
*Some have greatness thrust upon them!—Shakespeare.*

It was quite late in the morning when he was aroused from a deep sleep by a loud knocking at his door. Still fancying himself at Carnes's, and that his master was calling him, he rubbed his heavy lids and answered:

"Yes, sir; directly, sir; I'll be down this moment, sir!"

Then opening wide his eyes, he stared around the superb room and its furniture in bewilderment and terror. The knocking continued, accompanied now by a voice calling:

"Master Greville! Master Greville! if you please, sir, breakfast is quite ready, and the ladies are waiting!" Then the impression that he had died and passed into a happier state of existence left him as the recollection of the previous night's events returned.

He started up and admitted the mulatto boy, who assisted him to make a hasty toilet.

After which he went below stairs, Romy preceding him to open the door of a pleasant breakfast room where he found Mrs. Greville and Lois Howard, both in pretty, white cashmere morning dresses. Both met him with caresses and compliments on his improved appearance.



Oh, that Lois! with her gay, sparkling beauty, and her fond, sisterly freedoms! How dreadful it would be to lose her, if he should lose all the rest!

This was the thought that sped like a bolt of ice through the boy's heart as he sat down at the breakfast table.

He tried, for her sake, to speak and act with propriety. He narrowly observed the manners of Mrs. Greville and Miss Howard, that he might learn from them. Nature had done much already for him. She had made him handsome, graceful, and intelligent. He was, therefore, quick to apprehend and skilful to imitate the amenities of cultivated society. And if sometimes he made a mistake, his "elected" mother would suppose that he did it on purpose, or from the effect of habits contracted on Water street.

After breakfast, Mrs. Greville, who was unwearied in attention to her "returned prodigal," asked him how he would amuse himself.

And to her great delight the boy answered, if he could have his school-books he would like to study, as he had lost so much time.

"Certainly, my dear Fulke, certainly. And you need not immure yourself in your own room. You may have the library; no one uses it now. I will order Romy to unpack your class books, and take them there at once!" said Mrs. Greville, in a high state of approbation.

And now behold the fish boy in a dressing-gown and slippers, seated in an easy chair, with a pile of books before him on the table, in the sumptuous library of Greville House.

Here he invariably passed his long mornings in assiduous study, and so won upon the good opinion of his "mother" and his "guardian," that they decided upon rewarding him by giving a juvenile party during the Christmas holidays. When Welby heard of this he privately procured Count D'Orsay's *Etiquette for Gentlemen*, and read it with attention, keeping it in his pocket for constant, secret reference.



When the night of the party arrived, and the large drawing-rooms, beautifully decorated and splendidly illuminated, were filled with a numerous company of young ladies and gentlemen, from the ages of ten to seventeen, Welby was much embarrassed to find himself constantly accosted by young persons, who claimed acquaintance with him, but upon whom, of course, he had never in his life before set eyes.

But luckily, the incessant gabbling of these young magpies put him in possession of their names, and enough of their histories to relieve his perplexity, and place him at ease in their society. And thus the affair passed off pleasantly for all concerned.

A few days after the Christmas party, Welby thought he would go down to Water street; and, for the curiosity of the thing, look upon his old home and his old master.

When he reached the well-known corner house, and entered the shop, honest old Carnes, who was still shucking oysters behind the counter, as if he had never moved from that spot, looked up, and burst into a jolly laugh, exclaiming:

“Well, Master Greville, I have hearn all about it! Wa’n’t that a pretty lark for a young gentleman, like you, to go on? A running away from school, and a hiring of yourself to me to carry out oysters for a dollar a week, and your keep! You crying of oysters, and your fine lady mamma crying of her eyes out! Oh, Master Greville! what will young gentlemen do next, I wonder!”

“Carnes,” Welby felt impelled to say, “I am no more a young gentleman than you are. There is some great mistake. I am just what I told you I was when I first came here.”

“Get along with you, Master Greville! running of your rigs on an old cove like me! Sure, I knew from the first you were none of the common sort; though why you came down to crying oysters in the streets, I didn’t know. But



I was no ways surprised, I tell you, when I hearn as how you was all the time a young gentleman out on a lark!"

"Well, time will show, I suppose, Carnes. But I wish to know if you got back your oyster bucket. It was knocked out of my hands in the row, when I was kidnapped by the nobs, you know, and I didn't see what became of it?"

"Me get it back! who was to fetch it? No, sir; and that bucket, with the tin dipper, and the four measures, to say nothing of the oysters being all lost, warnt less than four dollars out of my pocket! And all along of the larks of you, young gentleman."

"Well, Carnes, here is a five dollar piece, and now I hope we are quits. It was partly to pay you this that I came to-day."

"And you for to go for to say as how you're no gentleman! Why, you've got the very ways of one!" exclaimed the well-pleased oysterman, as he tossed the half eagle in his hand.

Leaving kind messages for Miss Carnes, and the old father of the family, Welby bade the oysterman good-by, and left the shop.

When he reached home, Mrs. Greville desired his presence in her dressing-room. He repaired thither immediately.

"My dear Fulke," said the lady, "I sent for you to say, that to-morrow the Collegiate School re-opens for the next term. But if you dislike to return thither, you need not go; we can think the matter over, and select some other institution of learning."

"Mamma, since you permit me to call you so, I have not the slightest objection to the Collegiate School. I will go there or anywhere else where you may please to send me for education. And I will do my best to improve to the utmost the opportunities of learning you are so good as to afford me," said Welby, with earnest and sincere gratitude.

"That is my noble boy! Oh, Fulke! you will be a bless-



ing to me yet, as your dear father on his death-bed prophesied that you would!" said the lady, warmly embracing him.

"I wish to heaven I might be, madam—dear mamma, I mean!" answered Welby, with a sigh.

The next day, Welby Dunbar, as Master Fulke Greville, entered the Collegiate School under the direction of the Reverend Simon Dornton. Here, too, he was greeted by a host of youth, who loudly welcomed him back, and laughingly rallied him upon his late escapade. Not one of these had he ever chanced to meet before, though all seemed to know him as a very old and intimate friend. As upon the occasion of the juvenile party, Welby showed tact enough not to betray his own ignorance. By watching and observing, he soon learned enough of the names and characters of his future companions to make himself at home among them. When the classes met, the professors certainly thought that Master Fulke Greville had fallen wonderfully behindhand in every one of his studies, and that he had certainly the most treacherous memory they had ever met with. But this was all. For the rest, they encouraged him to study hard, in order to make up for lost time. And as Welby was resolved to do this very thing, and *did* do it, his progress in learning was wonderful, and won from all his masters the most cordial approbation.



## CHAPTER VI.

## A THREATENED DENOUEMENT.

Dame Fortune is a fickle gipsy,  
And always blind and often tipsy ;  
Sometimes for years and years together  
She'll bless you with the sunniest weather,  
Bestowing honor, pudding, pence,  
You can't imagine why, or whence ;  
Then in a moment, Presto—Pass !  
Your joys are withered like the grass.—*Praed.*

EVERY thing prospered with the fish boy. He was certainly a waif caught up and borne aloft upon the crest of the highest wave of fortune. Among the scores of people that he daily met, not one doubted his identity with young Fulke Greville ; all were unanimous in forcing his new rank upon him. And more than that, if any one interested had seriously disputed his claims to that name and position, and thrown the matter into chancery, there would have been so many hundred indisputable witnesses, comprising the mother, sister, guardian, teachers, schoolmates, friends, and servants, who had all known young Fulke Greville from his infancy, and who would have now sworn to his person, that any jury must have been constrained to bring in a verdict in his favor.

Or if the fish boy, feeling himself aggrieved by this enforced change of position, had revolted, and through any possible "next friend" made an appeal to the Supreme Court, the result must have been similar, and Welby Dunbar would have been condemned and sentenced to the name of Fulke Greville, and the inheritance of several hundred thousand dollars per annum !

The fish boy was very happy. The wildest flights of his imagination could never have soared to such heights of happiness as he now actually enjoyed. A few weeks ago his utmost hopes had been only to obtain some employment



at which he was willing to work hard all day, if by so doing he could have his evenings to devote to study, and such pay as should keep him in the plainest food and clothing, and leave him a few pence to spend on second-hand books to read.

And now just to think of it! He found himself in the possession of a luxurious home and ample means; his every want supplied, his every wish anticipated; indulged by an affectionate and doting mother; petted by a beautiful and loving sister; guided and instructed by loving and accomplished teachers. And more than all, his love of knowledge and devotion to books, which in his humbler station would have been matters of reproach, requiring to be apologized for, were now subjects of the highest merit, receiving the greatest commendation.

He bade fair to be soon at the head of his school. His Sundays were all spent at home with Mrs. Greville and Lois Howard.

Mrs. Greville began to idolize him; telling him, every time she saw him, how much he was improved in every possible way, in disposition, manners, and appearance; and how happy she was to see him growing so studious, amiable, and gentlemanly. And often, in a mistaken penitence, she would apologize to him for the seeming harshness that she felt persuaded had driven him from his school.

"That was the only thing you could possibly have had to complain of on my part, my son—the reduction of your expenditures, I mean. But you know, my dear Fulke, I thought it best for your own sake to keep you on a short allowance of funds while I remained abroad, and you here, with no mother's watchful eye to look after you. And that was the reason I cut down your usual amount of pocket money. Do you not now think yourself that I was right?"

Welby, who had long ago given up disputing his position with the lady, replied that he had no doubt that she had been right in all that she had done for her step-son's benefit.



"But now that your conduct satisfies me so entirely, I shall not only double your stipend, but authorize you to draw upon me at any time, for any further amount that you may desire. This is a confidence, my dear boy, that very few parents would repose in a young son. But I wish to make you some reparation for my former apparent stinginess, and I feel sure that you will not abuse my trust."

"Indeed I will not, my lady—I mean, my dear mamma!" said the fish boy.

And he kept his word, for he not only forbore to draw upon his generous patroness for any farther amount, but he never spent half of his allowance. Yes! the fish boy was very happy; not perfectly happy, however, please to observe! no one is in this world, not even children.

"There's allus a somethink," as the chimney-sweep said when he went to see Grisi and left his opera-glass in a cab. And the "somethink" that marred the perfect bliss of the fish boy was the intense consciousness of his false position, and the haunting fear of detection and exposure. And yet the reader is aware that he was no willing impostor. He did not forget his old friends. He prevailed on Mrs. Greville to give the large custom of her household to old Carnes. And in his boyishness eagerness he ran down to Water street to give the order for daily unlimited supplies of fish, clams, and oysters. He found the old fellow still a fixture behind his barrels, and told him the good news.

Carnes was profuse in his expressions of gratitude to his young patron.

"Now you stop that! Don't go to thank me! I don't deserve it! I am only one of those 'children of darkness who are wiser in their generation than the children of light!' I am only making 'friends of the mammon of unrighteousness.'"

"La, Master Greville! I hope you don't call *me* the mammon of unrighteousness. I'm not saying, nyther, that there beant unrighteousness enough about me, but as for



the mammon, there's a precious little of that!" said the oysterman.

"I mean," explained the youth, "that I am prospering finely just now; but my bright prosperity is a mere soap bubble, that may burst any moment, when I shall find myself compelled to fall back upon the fish and oyster line of business, and then, you know, I should be fortunate to find a friend in you. So pray keep a berth open for me. And this I ask you to do, in grand seriousness, as the French say—in French, mind you, and not in English."

"Bosh! Master Greville! If I didn't know you for a joker as 'ould have your joke, even if you was a-dyin', why I should think as how you was touched—*here*," said the old man, laughing, and putting his finger to his own forehead.

"Perhaps I am touched there, Mr. Carnes; I often have a suspicion that I may be. For, you see, insanity affects opposite subjects in opposite ways. Some maniacs, being beggars, imagine themselves kings. Perhaps, I, being really a gentleman, only imagine myself a fish boy," he said, not laughing, but deeply sighing, as he took leave of the old man, and turned his steps homeward. I repeat, he was no voluntary impostor; yet as the months rolled on, and he became more and more habituated to the elegance and luxury of his home, the caressing affection of the stately Mrs. Greville, and the delightful love of the beautiful Lois, his fear of a denouement increased rather than diminished; for oh! he felt that every day brought nearer the discovery that must come at last. And he dreaded the fall of the blow as the felon dreads execution; for he felt that he could not survive it. The parting from his sumptuous home would be bad enough! the separation from his magnificent mother would be much worse! but the loss of the lovely Lois must be his death-blow! And therefore he dreaded the denouement that must sooner or later arrive, as the criminal dreads the headsman's axe!

He loved the beautiful Lois with all the pure and pas-



sionate affection of his young heart. He knew, too, from the gossip of the old servants, as well as from the "chaffing" of his college companions, that Fulke Greville and Lois Howard, being no blood relations, had been destined from their infancy for each other! And *he* was called—"Fulke Greville!"

"You two will be obliged to marry each other, you know, just so soon as you are of age, whether you like it or not! Or Madame Greville will be for serving you out as she did Esther; for, polite as she is, she won't bear contradiction in a matter that she sets her heart upon," said Clement Courtney, the son of his guardian and one of his college companions to him one day.

"Esther! Who was Esther?" He had never heard the name before! But not for the world would he have exposed his ignorance.

One day, however, when he was alone with Mrs. Greville, he felt irresistibly prompted to say, despite of all risks:

"Mamma, will you tell me all about Esther?"

Mrs. Greville's face became ghastly.

"Fulke!" she gasped, "how dare you speak a name that has not been uttered in this house for years? You and Lois have both forgotten Esther, as it is natural you should—and as I wish I myself could. Fulke, she was the daughter of my very first marriage. She was ten years older than Lois, and much handsomer, with a brilliant complexion, and burning black eyes and hair. But, Fulke, when she was but fourteen years of age—(and you and Lois were but four years of age, for it was in the first year of my union with your father)—she was stolen by an Irish dragoon, who made her his wife, and took her to his home in the south! Since that I have never received a letter from her, nor suffered her name to be mentioned in my presence. Let it die now and henceforth. Yet learn from her story this one lesson—never to cross me in the dearest purpose of my heart. You are aware that you and Lois



are, and have been from your earliest infancy, destined for each other. It was the wish of my dearest husband, your father, and it is therefore my set purpose. You are nearly approaching the age now, when young gentlemen, very prematurely, but very certainly, begin to think of young ladies. Fulke, look at me! Forget that there is any other young lady in the world except Lois!"

As she spoke, a broad, blue glare like sheet lightning flashed from her eyes, but was gone in an instant!

But what a terrible look it was! What a revelation of her real character! Now, caress him tenderly as she might, the fish boy would feel that her hands were the paws of a leopardess upon him. So he thought, as he hastened, with trembling frame, and blushing cheeks, and faltering tongue, to assure her that he loved Lois better than his own life; that he would rather have her than possess the whole world; and that if he lost her, he should die.

"You shall never lose her; *I* will take care of *that*," said the lady, grimly. And thus the interview closed.

"Married three times, and still so handsome! I wonder if she killed and ate her three husbands, one after the other, the splendid tigress! And, oh! but won't she tear me neither when she finds out who I am!" said the fish boy, with a shudder. And from this day he dreaded the denouement worse than ever.

That denouement seemed at length at hand.

Mrs. Greville was preparing for a voyage and a long residence in Europe. Her object was to place her daughter Lois at a Parisian school, and "son Fulke" at a German University, and afterward to give them the advantage of extensive travel over the continent. While the fish boy was completing his last term at the Collegiate School, and Lois her last term at the Ladies' Academy, and Mrs. Greville was settling up her last home affairs, one morning a letter was placed in her hand. Seeing the postmark, she was about to fling it from her; but upon looking closer at



the handwriting, she seemed surprised, and opened and perused its contents. They were as follows:

FULJOY'S ISLAND, *July 1st.*

MADAM:—I break the silence of many years, to inquire of you whether you have totally abandoned your step-son, young Fulke Greville? whether you think him quite unworthy of your further notice; and whether you really think it was well done so thoroughly to reprobate so young an offender? For I suppose he gave you just cause of anger in leaving the school where you had placed him; but I insist that was no reason for leaving him to his fate. Although I have waited in vain to see some advertisement for him, I still hope that you may be pleased, rather than otherwise, to hear that he is not utterly lost. About eighteen months ago, in the midst of the severest weather of that severe winter, he came on foot, to my house. He had walked all the way from New York. He arrived travel-stained, weather-beaten, ragged, and emaciated. He told me his sad story, which I do not wish to wound you by repeating. I received him as my own son, and placed him at the University of Virginia. How he has conducted himself during the eighteen months of his sojourn there, you will see by the Annual Report of the University, which I have the honor of sending you with this. Young Fulke Greville is now spending the midsummer vacation with me. As you are his legal guardian, he is of course at your disposal. He desires to know if he may be forgiven, and restored to your affections, if not to your favor. I am, however, quite willing to provide for him as for my own son. I have the honor to be, madam,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM FULJOY, *of the Isle.*

The lady read this letter with the utmost astonishment, remained in deep thought for some minutes, and then drew



her writing-desk before her, and sat down and answered it. She despatched her letter, and summoned the fish boy to her presence.

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## CHAPTER VII.

WILLIAM FULJOY.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild,  
In wit a man, simplicity a child.—*Pope.*

WE must now shift the scene of this romance in real life to a lovely little island that lies smiling within the arms of one of those numerous picturesque creeks that make up from the mighty Chesapeake into the western shore of Maryland.

The swelling island and the towering banks of the creek were still covered with the primeval forest, now clothed with the luxuriant verdure of midsummer, and glowing under the glorious sun of noonday.

The deepest solitude and silence seemed to reign here, for the stillness was scarcely moved by the soft sound of the multitudinous waves as they kissed the shore, the low whisper of myriad leaves as they thrilled to the caressing breeze, or the sweet twitter of the birds as they loved in the shade.

But a little farther back from the shores, the country was open, richly cultivated, and dappled over with pleasant farm-houses and thriving villages.

And at the mouth of the creek, on its southern point, stood a prosperous little seaport town, doing a profitable business in the tobacco trade.

And thus, within easy reach of this sylvan solitude, the scenes of busy agricultural or commercial life prevailed.

But the beautiful isle, that arose from the bosom of the



bright waters, shaded by their forest-crowned banks, merits a nearer view. It arose in the form of a gently swelling hill, gradually ascending from its thickly wooded circumference to its sunny centre, where, amid blooming pleasure grounds, gardens, and shrubberies, stood the elegant white free-stone mansion of the proprietor.

This happy proprietor was Captain William Fuljoy, a fine, hale old gentleman, who having spent the best years of a long life in the merchant service, had now retired upon an ample fortune, to enjoy well earned repose in his delightful home, amid his beloved books, his favorite pictures, his pet animals, his cherished servants, his beautiful scenery, and within easy reach of his only sweetheart, the sea!

Captain Fuljoy was at this time seventy years of age, tall and stout in form, full and red in face, and white in hair and moustache. This was what more than half a century of sea-faring had done for him. But notwithstanding this, he was really, for his age, a very fine-looking and even very handsome old man; for his features were faultlessly regular, his mouth well curved, his nose straight, and his full-orbed blue eyes were as clear, sweet, and honest as those of innocent childhood. And wherefore not?

“Keep innocency,” says the Scripture. And if this had not been possible, we should not have been enjoined to do it. William Fuljoy had done this. Through seventy years of varied intercourse with all the nations of the earth, in a profession fuller of temptation, sin, and danger than almost any other, William Fuljoy, deep in his heart of hearts, had kept the spring of innocency undefiled.

And this was the reason why, at seventy years old, he enjoyed in his own person the happy simplicity of youth, the proud strength of manhood, and the ripe wisdom of age. He was brave, as the history of many a hard sea fight would show; tender, as many a comforted sufferer could prove; loving, as all who approached him felt; constant, as one gone before him to Heaven knew; sincere,



for none ever heard him utter even a polite conventional falsehood ; yet delicate, for none ever knew him to wound the feelings of another, even by his plainest truth ; he was generous, as all the needy within his reach could tell ; and self-denying, as his own personal habits would testify. He was just in thought, word, and deed.

He had a well cultivated mind and a well stored memory ; he had studied the literature of Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, in the original, and spoke the languages of those countries with the ease of a native.

But of course William Fuljoy was not perfect ; he had his weak point—at least so his best friends said—and it was this—he was romantic ! for not only did he love poetry, novels, music, painting, stars, flowers, seas, mountains, and all the sublime and beautiful in nature and in art, but—he believed in the excellence of human nature !

William Fuljoy ought to have been a happy husband and father, but he was not. He adored womanhood with a pure though passionate worship, but he had never been married. This was the reason : in his early youth he was betrothed to a lovely maiden, to whom he was devotedly attached. Many weary years did the faithful lovers wait for the time when William should be able to marry Mary. At length that day arrived. After a prosperous voyage he reached home to claim his bride. He was shown her grave. She had been dead a week. “Gone out of sight,” he said ; for to him she could not die—to him she still lived. This happened when William Fuljoy was thirty years of age. But he never sought another woman. Whenever, in after time, he was jested with upon the subject of matrimony, he declared that he was already a married man ; that he had a wife living in the better land, to whom he resolved to be faithful as long as he should sojourn in this. To his own soul he said that she had never left him, that she was ever with him, and often nearer to him than ever she could have come in the flesh ; that her spirit entered, pervaded, and



governed him. This was all very German, of course; but then the innocent captain, in the lonely night watches at sea, had dreamt much over works of Jacob Boëhme and Emmanuel Swedenborg.

But though the captain never married, it was impossible that such a good and loving nature should not have formed close social ties. And so it followed that very soon after the captain retired to his beautiful island home, he gathered about him quite a family circle.

And such a family circle! There was not one of them that had the slightest legal claim upon his protection. But as the unsheltered seek a refuge, so had the forlorn ones sought him.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### FULKE GREVILLE.

A kind, true heart, a spirit high,  
That cannot fear and will not bow,  
Are written in his manly eye,  
And on his manly brow.—*Halleck.*

His first protégè came to him as follows:

It was the first winter of his settlement at home, upon a tempestuous night in the month of January, that Captain Fuljoy grew tired of sitting over the fire in his comfortable library, and so arose and opened the French window, and stepped out upon the porch to look at the weather. The storm had ceased, the sky had cleared, and the snow lay gleaming white beneath the beams of the full moon. It was almost as light as day, and as the captain walked up and down the porch, inhaling the fresh air and thanking Heaven for the favorable change in the weather, he saw approach the figure of a boy. Astonishment at seeing a strange lad on the island at that hour of the night held the captain



spell-bound, until the visitor stepped upon the porch, and lifting a shocking bad hat, said :

“Pray, sir, does Captain Fuljoy live here?”

“Yes! I am Captain Fuljoy; but——”

“You don’t know me, uncle! I am Fulke Greville, your nephew!” said the lad.

“Fulke! Grev—! Lord bless my soul alive! Come in here and let me have a look at you!”

And the old man pulled the boy into the room, and stood gazing in consternation upon him.

He was a fine-looking youth of about fifteen years of age, with a tall and well proportioned form, regular features, dark complexion, and raven black hair and eyes; but his clothing was travel-stained, his shoes worn, and his hat battered.

“Lord bless my soul and body! Where did you come from? How did you cross the water, and why are you here at all?” gasped out the captain, as soon as he could recover his breath and command his voice.

But as soon as the lad opened his lips to answer, the captain interrupted him by saying:

“Stop! hush! You are wringing wet, and shaking with cold, and hungry, no doubt. You must have dry clothes and supper, and get warmed and rested before you answer any questions.”

As soon as the boy was made comfortable, and seated in an arm-chair opposite his uncle, he told his story. His mother, captain Fuljoy’s step-sister, had died first; his father had married a second time, a wealthy widow, whose property was all secured absolutely and exclusively to herself, but he had survived his marriage only a few months, and died, as it was supposed, in embarrassment. All this the captain already knew, but he had yet to learn what followed.

In impassioned and indeed exaggerated language, the high-spirited boy told of his real or imaginary wrongs—of



the cold charity bestowed by his step-mother upon her husband's orphan son; of the cheap boarding-school, with its hard fare, to which he had been sent; of the scant wardrobe, the pittance of pocket money grudgingly doled forth, and so on!

"And what hurt my feelings worse than all, was the thought that I really had no claim upon her at all. Because after all, you see, sir, she was not my own mother."

"My poor boy!" sighed the good captain.

"And so at last I could not bear any more, and I ran away from school and came to you, uncle," continued Fulke.

"My poor lad!" repeated the old man; "but how did you travel?"

"I walked all the way from New York."

"Walked!"

"Yes, I had no money, and I sold my clothes to pay for supper and lodging every night on the road; I was a week walking it; the roads were very bad. And now, uncle, if you will put me at any work by which I can earn my own bread, you will find out that I am not an idle boy."

Poor fellow! He had said that he had no claim upon his step-mother; neither, certainly, had he the slightest claim upon Captain Fuljoy; he was only the son of Captain Fuljoy's step-sister. But when did his rich heart ever dishonor a bill drawn upon his benevolence?

He did not put the high-spirited lad to work; he put him to college, entering him at the University of Virginia at his own expense.

He had never cause to regret his confidence.

The reports of the youth's deportment and progress were always most satisfactory.

He watched the newspapers in the expectation of seeing some advertisement on the part of the step-mother or the teachers for the lost boy. But none such appeared. Nor was any search or inquiry, as far as he knew, made. The guardians of Fulke Greville seemed to have abandoned or



forgotten him. And Captain Fuljoy, in his disgust and indignation at their selfishness and indifference, did not volunteer to write and offer them any information.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### DANEY.

Oval cheeks encolored faintly,  
Which a trail of golden hair  
Keeps from fading off to air.—*Mrs. Browning.*

THE next protégé of the captain came to him in the following manner :

It was the summer succeeding the unexpected arrival of Fulke Greville. That young gentleman was pursuing his studies at the university. Captain Fuljoy was living alone on his beautiful island.

It was a glorious morning in June. And the captain was out upon his long, vine-shaded porch, embarrassed only with the variety of his own sources of enjoyment. It was good to watch him.

His ample porch ran around three sides of the house, and offered an enchanting prospect, first of his own richly cultivated grounds, filled with blooming and fragrant flowers and shrubs ; below them the girdle of forest trees that surrounded the outer edge of the island ; then the blue waters of the creek, so clear that they reflected as a mirror the forest-crowned hills of the opposite shore ; over all the deep-blue sky, dappled over with its soft white clouds.

Captain Fuljoy would pace up and down this porch, taking in all the beauty of this scene, until his limbs were weary, and then throw himself into an arm-chair and bury his mind deep in the pages of Quentin Durward, where he would remain until the sudden outburst of joyous song



from some bright bird over his head, would rouse him out of the regions of imagination and the past, and recall him to nature and the present. Then he would arise and pace the porch, inhaling from the heavens and earth deep draughts of beauty and delight.

"I am blessed beyond my merits; I am too happy; and I should fear the approach of some counterbalancing evil, if I did not trust in the free goodness of the Lord," thought the humble and grateful old man, as he reverently raised his hat and replaced it upon his head.

Again he threw himself into his chair, and soon became absorbed in the fortunes of the young Scotch adventurer, when again he was disturbed by a bird alighting upon the brim of his straw hat.

He raised his eyes from his book, and there, on a footstool before him, sat a little girl, quite still, and gazing at him with large, calm, blue eyes. For, you see, neither birds nor babies feared the big captain, though the enemies of his country might have had just cause to do so.

For a moment he gazed in speechless amazement upon the vision, doubting the evidence of his own senses. What was it? Where had it come from? Had it dropped from the sky? Had the little bird brought it? The bird almost might, it was so small a child. At length he spoke:

"Who are you, baby?"

"Daney," answered the mite, without winking.

"Danæ?" said the captain, reverting to his mythological studies.

"No, Daney," replied the apparition, measuring the questioner from head to foot with her blue, fearless eyes.

"I never heard of such a name in all the days of my life! Who dropped you here, Daney?"

"None body. I tomed my own self."

"You come your own self! Why, what in the world did you come for?"

"Betause I wanted to."



"Because you wanted to. That's very plain English! But why did you want to come here, baby?"

"'Tause it is so nice here!" replied the atom, looking in the face of the questioner with an expression of surprise, at what she seemed to consider so very vain a question.

"Why, so it is nice here! and so far you show your taste, baby. But where did you come from?"

"F'om de water."

The captain looked puzzled. The sprite before him seemed, indeed, as if it might have been a mermaid's baby, or a water-nymph, or a spirit. Half doubting whether his hands would not pass through it as through a shape of air, he took the child upon his knee, and looked at her attentively. She was a little creature, seemingly of about three years of age, very thin and pale, with light yellow hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes. She wore a faded nankeen slip. And so her face, hair, and dress were all of one hue—pale yellow; and, in truth, a more washed-out, faded-looking little object was never seen before. And yet her features were delicate and regular; her wrists and ankles slender and well turned; and her bare feet and hands small and perfect in form.

"How old are you, little one?—two, three, four year old?"

"Oh, a dreat deal older dan dat! hund'ed and hund'ed year old!"

The captain quickly put the thing off his knees, stood it before him, and stared at it in consternation, exclaiming:

"What!"

"Me so old, me don't know *how* old! Me don't know when me first was!"

The honest old bachelor was too unfamiliar with children to know any thing about their oftentimes queer notions of themselves, and so he gazed upon this antediluvian infant in unmitigated amazement.

"Who is your mother, baby?" he asked.



"Dudy."

"That's another unheard of name! Who is your father?"

"Doe!—tate me up in your lap adain," said the child, holding out her arms.

It was not in William Fuljoy's loving nature to resist this appeal. He raised the child to his knee. She turned, put her little thin white arm up over his shoulder, nestled her little pale face against his bosom, and with a sigh of deep satisfaction resigned herself to repose, murmuring softly:

"Me do to leep now."

And she did go to sleep. And the captain remained as one spell-bound. For fear of disturbing her rest, he sat so still that the little bird came back and perched itself again on the rim of his hat. And a figure the captain looked, sitting there with the child in his arms and the bird on his hat! How long the patient captain might have sat there, if he had been left alone, no one knows—probably until he fell asleep himself, if he had not been startled by the sound of swiftly approaching footsteps, followed by the appearance of a tall, dark, wild-looking woman, who, with bare head and streaming hair, strode into the porch, screaming out:

"Arrah, thin, and ye are there, sure enough, are ye? And me wid my two eyes out on sticks looking for ye! Wait till I get ye, that's all!"

The noise awakened the child, who stared around her with a frightened glance, and then, recognizing the woman, slid down from the knee of her new friend, saying, with a sort of sad, baby humility and patience:

"Me mus' do home now."

"Is this your child, my good woman?" inquired the captain.

"And sure whose else should she be, and bad luck to her! I beg your honor's pardon, but me heart's broke entirely



wid thrying to kape her in. Sure, if I was to put my eyes out on two sticks, I couldn't kape the sight of her. But she'll no be throubling your honor sune again after the bathing I'll give her!" exclaimed the tall virago, giving the little one a premonitory shake.

"No, she has not troubled me a bit—not the least bit—poor little thing! And pray do not hurt her. Did you say she was *your* child—*your own* child?"

"Sure and aint I just after telling your honor that same?"

The captain looked from the woman to the child, comparing them together. The woman was unusually tall, muscular, and strong, with high, well-cut features, a dark, swarthy complexion, deeply-set, burning black eyes, well-marked, black eyebrows, and long black hair plentifully mixed with grey. She must have been handsome in her prime; but that was long past; she was sixty, if a day, and probably older than that!

The child was small, delicate, and fragile, with minute features, fair, pale complexion, large, full, blue eyes, and light yellow hair, and no more than four years of age—possibly not so much.

The woman was fierce, violent, and dangerous-looking—the child gentle, patient, and loving. There was not a point of resemblance between them.

And simple, credulous, and confiding as the old bachelor was, he was not quite prepared to receive as Gospel-truth the statement that this baby of four could be the child of that woman of sixty.

"Who are you, then, and how came you and the child upon this isle?" demanded the captain, not shortly or angrily, but kindly and curiously.

"Why, doesn't your honor know Joe Drury, as you brought here to look after your honor's fishing-boats and tackle?" said the woman.

"Oh! And you are——"



"His wife, your honor."

"And this is your child?"

"Aint I after telling your honor so?"

"And his?"

"Sartain sure, sir; you wouldn't be insinuating any thing else, and meself an honest woman?"

"No, no, certainly not; but I thought—indeed I don't know what I did think," said the captain, ingenuously.

"Come, Daney," said the woman, taking the hand of the child to lead her off.

"Stay—now don't beat her, pray don't. Here is something to buy you a new dress and purchase her pardon; but you must promise me not to hurt her."

"I'll let her off this time for your honor's sake; but sure if she's after running away again—Oh, thank your honor! and may your road to heaven be paved with gold!" exclaimed the woman, stopping to pick up the half-eagle thrown her as a peace-offering from the captain. And she departed, leading "Janey" away, the captain's yearning pity going after the baby.

The captain dined at his usual early hour. And after dinner he took his accustomed nap on the settee in the porch. And then he woke up and thought of Daney. And as the child had called upon him in the morning, he thought he would return her call in the afternoon, and see what sort of a home Daney's rude parents had made for her.



## CHAPTER X.

## DANEY'S HOME.

A lonesome lodge,  
That stands so low in lonely glen,  
With little window dim and dark.—*Percy's Reliques.*

HE put his straw hat upon his head, entered the house, passed through the central hall that ran from front to back, went out at the back door and through the kitchen garden, and the vineyard and the orchard, toward the north end of the island, where his fisherman's cottage stood. It had been a neat, picturesque little log-cabin some months before, when, more from charity than any other motive, he had settled a poor Irish emigrant there, to look after his fishing-boats. But a very disagreeable surprise awaited him now—as he passed through the thicket of trees that, as I said before, girdled the whole island around, his senses were no longer regaled with the delightful fragrance of flowering shrubs and trees—on the contrary, they were assailed by the nauseous effluvia of stale fish, oyster-shells, and other decaying and pestilential animal and vegetable matter.

This scarcely, however, prepared him for the revolting sight that burst upon his view when he had passed the thicket. There, between the thicket and the water, stood the naked log-cabin, with all the ground laid waste around it. Heaps of ashes, cinders, oyster-shells, and fish-bones lay scattered where once the wild flowers grew, and old hats, shawls, and trowsers stuffed the broken windows, once whole and shaded by the eglantine and the honeysuckle. There are some whose demon moves them to deface and destroy, as there are others whose spirit leads them to build up and beautify. The captain gazed upon this squalor with real pain.



His beloved island was a paradise of cleanliness as well as of beauty and salubrity.

But this squalid shanty, with its filthy surroundings, seemed like a foul ulcer upon its fair bosom.

The captain groaned in the spirit. He had no alternative but to bear this nuisance, or to turn out the family—the first would wound his ideality, the last would pain his benevolence. In either case he must suffer something! Ah! how many of the refined and sensitive there are impaled upon the horns of the same dilemma. He instantly decided, as in such cases all noble minds decide. He would bear the nuisance as long as possible, rather than inflict suffering upon others.

Standing near the cabin was Joe, the fisherman. He was a tall, athletic, swarthy, black haired Milesian, who, from the resemblance he bore her, might have been taken for his wife's brother, rather than her husband. But saddest sight of all, there on the dirty door-sill sat little Daney, who seemed penetrated by all the ugliness around her, for her little face was quivering with distaste.

She was the first to see Captain Fuljoy, and she started up and came to meet him, saying:

"Don't tome; it aint nice here."

"No, my poor baby, it isn't," said the captain, and then turning to the fisherman, who had lounged up and plucked off his hat in token of respect, inquired: "How is this, Drury? What have you been doing to the cottage?"

But before the man could answer, his wife put her head out of the door, and replied:

"If it's the briar bushes at the windys your honor is maning, sure they only served to kape out the daylight, and to breed insects, and they are better away entirely."

"But the flowers and the grass!"

"Och! sure your honor's glory would niver look to see the mither of a family wasting her time wid the flowers! And sure Joe, the craychur, has enough to do wid attinding to the boats."



“But the heaps of unwholesome dirt around! Surely—”

“Och hone! Your honor’s come here only to find fault entirely, when me heart is smashed to smithereens already through thrying to kape things dacent,” said Judy, throwing her apron over her head, and preparing to howl.

“Well, well, there! don’t cry! I’ll send some of my people here to-morrow and have the place cleaned, and then perhaps you will be able to keep it in better order,” said the good-natured old man. And then he stooped and patted the child on the head, and turned and hurried from a spot where his every sense was pained.

“I am sorry for that poor baby there! She is like a pearl on an ash-heap! I don’t wonder she tries to get away. *Can* she be their child? She seems to be made of different clay—porcelain clay; while they are of potter’s earth,” soliloquized the old man, dubiously shaking his head, as he sauntered on toward his own delightful home.

He kept his word, and in the morning sent a man and woman to the cabin to put the premises in good order again. But what was the use? In a fortnight it was as bad as ever. But every day the little child strayed to the mansion. She came so softly that the captain would be unaware of her presence until he happened to look up from his book, and see her sitting still upon the steps of the porch, or upon the footstool near his chair. And then the content upon the little pale face was good to see. She never spoke except when spoken to; but seemed satisfied only to sit upon that pleasant porch and enjoy the beauty, music, and fragrance around her. Sitting on the steps of the porch, she would sometimes lean caressingly toward one of the rose trees that grew each side the entrance, and put up her little arm and draw the blooming boughs lovingly toward her face; but she never plucked a flower. The little birds were not afraid of her, but would light upon her head as readily as upon a twig. Ill-health, ill-treatment, or depressing surroundings, had subdued in her the joyous, restless,



mischievous spirit of childhood, but left the loving heart still sweet, gentle, and confiding.

"Why do you like to come here, Daney?" the captain would sometimes ask her.

"Tause it is so nice here," was her invariable answer.

Each day, when she had finished her visit, she would disappear as silently as she had come.

Judy no longer took the trouble to come after her, or in any way to interfere with her visits to the porch. Since the child's presence at the mansion gave no offence to the captain, her absence from the cabin gave no uneasiness to Judy.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### DANEY'S NEW RESIDENCE.

It is a home to live for, as it stands,  
Through its vine-foliage, sending forth a sound  
Of mirthful childhood, o'er the green repose  
And laughing sunshine of the pastures round.—*Mrs. Hemans.*

So passed all the summer and autumn. Winter came with its deep snows. The island looked like an enormous bride-cake, frosted and decorated with evergreens. The captain was confined to the house, and saw no more of his baby visiter. The captain sat and read his romances in his pretty library, whose French windows opened upon the front porch. On the morning of Christmas Eve, he was sitting in his arm-chair, deep in the adventures of Oliver Twist, when, laying down his book for a moment, that he might stir the fire, his eyes fell upon

"Daney"—

sitting demurely upon a stool in the chimney corner, and letting her large blue eyes rove in admiration all over the room, from the brilliant flowers of the Brussels carpet, and



the crimson velvet arm-chairs and ottomans, to the gilded blinds and crimson curtains of the windows, the richly framed pictures that decorated the walls, and the glass cases through which gleamed row above row of richly bound books—(for, you see, the captain dearly loved finery, even in the dress of his favorite volumes.)

“Why, Daney! how ever did you get here?” asked the captain, in pleased surprise, for he had missed the gentle presence of his little visitor more than he was quite conscious of until her reappearance enlightened him. “How did you get in, Daney?”

“T’rough de glass door. Oh! it is so nice here!”

“Yes,” said the flattered captain, looking around with renewed appreciation of his comforts, and feeling himself warm and brighten in all that glow of crimson and gleam of gold. Then he turned his eyes upon the child, and thought how cheerless, comfortless, and hopeless must be her life in that squalid shanty, especially now that she could not seek relief among the trees and birds and flowers. And as he looked, he was shocked to see how cold and blue and pinched the child looked. Her head and feet were bare as in summer, and she wore the same yellow cotton frock that she had on when she first came to the porch in the preceding June.

A pang of remorse shot through the captain’s heart. What *had* he been thinking of—sighing over Oliver Twist’s troubles, and leaving this little child to suffer.

The child saw the disturbance on the old man’s working face, and mistook the cause. Rising meekly from her stool, she said:

“Me trouble you; me will go home now.”

But with a burst of compunctious tenderness, the captain stretched forth his arms and caught her, saying:

“No, Daney; no, little one—you don’t trouble me; you never did. And you need not go away, Daney. You may stay here, and be my little girl forever.”



“Me! 'tay here!” cried the child, in incredulous wonder.

“Yes, Daney, forever! Should you not like it?”

“Oh! so much!” cried the amazed and delighted child, while a smile of such rapture lighted her pale face as it was worth half his wealth to have lighted up. He raised her to his knees, gathered her to his bosom, and cherished and thawed her naked, half-frozen feet in his large, warm hands.

“Daney,” he said, as though he felt that he was addressing one who could understand him, and with whom he was about to enter into deeply responsible relations—“Daney, this is the Eve of Christmas. More than eighteen hundred years ago a child was born to us, who, by his life of suffering and his death of agony, was to redeem the world. While he was yet on earth, he said, of a child, ‘Who so receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me.’ And on this the eve of his natal day, and in his name, I receive thee, Daney! And as I deal by thee, may Christ the Saviour deal by me!”

“And you will always teep me here; and never send me away adain?” inquired the child, with beaming eyes.

“I will always keep you, Daney, unless you yourself, when you grow to be a young woman, should choose to leave me.”

“But Daney never will go.”

“Do you like this place so well, then?” said the captain, feeling so happy in the happiness he was conferring, as to wish to dwell upon the subject.

“Oh, so much! It is lite Heaven! aint it?”

“It must, indeed, seem so to you by contrast, my poor child! Oh, dear Lord! to think that I—even I—should have it in my human power to place even the least of the little ones in an earthly heaven!” said the captain, with emotion.

Then he arose and rung the bell, and said to the servant that answered it:



"Send Miss Hit to me; and do you go down to the fisherman's cabin, and tell Drury and his wife that I want to see them immediately."

The servant withdrew, and in a few minutes there entered the largest woman that ever was seen. The captain was no baby, but a very big old man, and Miss Mehitable Powers was a great deal bigger than the captain. She was a very tall, stout, fat woman, with a large head covered with flaxen curls, and a broad, full, fair face. She panted for breath as she walked and talked. She liked light colors, even in winter, and upon this occasion she wore a light drab merino dress, that made her seem even larger than she was. Miss Hit was intelligent, conscientious, benevolent, and, notwithstanding that she was the most forlorn of all forlornities—a poor, helpless, and friendless gentlewoman, she was very cheerful. She had been a governess in her youth and middle age, but never having been able to save money at that thankless occupation, she had found herself, when past labor, penniless, homeless, and, alas! by consequence, friendless. She had lived by making long visits to each of her acquaintances in succession, and wearing out all. For oh! you see, Miss Hit was so big, and panted so hard, and had such an enormous appetite, and required so much air, that she might have counted for three visitors instead of one. Her name became "a household word" of no very pleasing import in the neighborhood. Every one dreaded a three months' visitation from Miss Hit, and every one got it with whom she had the slightest acquaintance. For what could she do, poor thing? But nothing could exceed the cheerfulness, good humor, and fortitude with which she endured rebuffs, affronts, and coldness that would have broken any other heart. But "God fits the back to the burden," and Miss Hit's was of the broadest.

The captain had heard a deal of complaint made of Miss Hit, and a great deal of dread expressed of her visitations. And from the bottom of his kind heart he



pitied her. Now, he had no more need of a housekeeper than a coach has of a fifth wheel. And Miss Hit was no more capable of keeping his house than she was of doing any thing else useful. And he knew it. And yet out of the compassion of his benevolent heart he offered her five hundred dollars a year to come and keep house for him! Miss Hit did not exactly jump at the offer for two reasons—first, she was a great deal too big, fat, and unwieldy to jump at any thing, and, secondly, she felt her own utter incapacity, and frankly confessed it. But the captain, who wished to do her good, and not to make her useful, would take no refusal.

“Oh, captain!” she said, at length, “you are very good, but—consider people’s tongues.”

“Oh, nonsense about people’s tongues, Miss Hit! Fear God and keep the ten commandments, and you may set people’s tongues at defiance!” said the honest old sailor.

And so Miss Hit moved to the island, and as the end of children’s stories say, “lived happy ever afterward.” She poured out the captain’s coffee and tea, and that was the extent of her housekeeping; for she would have no more ventured to interfere with the domestic government of old Aunt Molly, the cook, than she would have run her flaxen head into the kitchen fire. Miss Hit had been with the captain more than a year when she was summoned to his presence this Christmas Eve. And now she stood, panting and blowing, and gazing with astonishment at the captain’s occupation, while she awaited his commands.

“Miss Hit, this is my child, and I wish you to be a mother to her,” he said.

“Well, Captain Fuljoy! I’m sure, sir! And at your age! And to me! What next, I wonder!” rather incoherently exclaimed the deeply scandalized lady.

“Bosh! I meant to say that I, who am childless, have adopted this little child, and that I wish you to be very good to her! And, first of all, I want you to put a warm, nice, new suit of clothes on her immediately.”



"Good gracious me, captain! Where do you think I could find a suit of clothes for her to-day! There never has been a child in this house, or a child's dress! So where am I to get it?"

"Why, sew one up for her at once! She is but a little thing, and the seam wouldn't be half as long as my arm, and that wouldn't take you five minutes to sew! I know *something* about needlework, if I am an old bachelor," said the captain, confidently.

This took the last whiff of Miss Hit's short breath away, leaving her quite incapable of remonstrance or reply. And before she recovered her wind or wits, the captain put the child in her arms, saying:

"There, take her away! I see Judy coming, and I wish to see her alone. And hear! Miss Hit! to-morrow is Christmas Day, you know! So have the child a pretty, nice, new suit; and let it be something bright, and soft, and warm, and—you know what I mean!"

"May I die if I do!" groaned Miss Hit, as she lugged her burden off.

"Me tan walk! and me don't want any new clothes; and me will give no trouble; and me will be very good if you will let me 'tay. It is so nice here," pleaded the child.

Miss Hit, who was really very kind-hearted, laid the child's cheek against her own by way of reply, and then asked:

"Are you the little Irish girl from the shanty?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I thought so, but I did not know you at first," said Miss Hit, bearing her out of hearing.

Meantime Judy entered the library.

"I sent for you about Daney," said the captain.

"Sure and I knew it! I said she'd tire your honor out at long last! I'm heart-scalded along of the throuble of that child! Sure and I wish I had never seen the face of her!" said the woman.



The captain looked at her in surprise and disgust, as well as with renewed suspicion.

"No mother ever wishes that of her own child," he said.

"Indade and she *is* my own child, though," said the woman, obstinately.

"Very well, you know best. But now I have a proposal to make to you. The child is here."

"Bedad! and I know that same."

"I wish to adopt her. I will bind myself to support, educate, and provide for her. If you *are* her mother, you will be glad of any improvement in her circumstances. If you are *not* her mother, you will be still gladder to get rid of a child that you consider so very troublesome."

The woman dropped her head upon her breast for a moment, and seemed to turn the matter over in her mind. Then raising her keen, black eyes to the captain's face, she said:

"Sure if your honor has taken a liking to the child, and will do a good part by her, you can have her. But sure your honor would never want to ask to take a poor woman's child without making her some satisfaction for it."

"Satisfaction?" repeated the captain, dubiously.

"Yes, your honor. Indade and I wouldn't be evening a human baby to a brute baste; but still your honor wouldn't even want to take a pet dog off the likes of me without paying for it, let alone a child!"

The captain gazed at her in horror, turned pale and red, left his chair, and trotted up and down the room, groaned, and blowed, and wiped his face, and then, with an effort at self-control, he returned and sat down, and said:

"Did I understand you aright? Did you mean to say that you would sell the child?"

"Yes, your honor," was the undaunted reply.

"Woman! you are no more the mother of that child than I am! nor half as much! To wish to sell her! I will not



buy her! I will adopt her! I will not give you one cent for her! But I will give you and your husband five hundred dollars if you will go off the island, and never let me see your faces again!"

The woman smiled—a very unpleasant smile—and looked down for a moment, and then replied:

"I will speak to Drury."

She went away and spoke to Drury. And the result was, that they took the captain's money; and the same day removed themselves down to Cornport, the little town at the mouth of the creek of which I have already spoken, and the same week they left that place also for "parts unknown."

The captain did not see "his child" the remainder of that day. Miss Hit had Daney up-stairs in her own room, where she held a solemn consultation with Mandy and Sephy the chambermaids, on the feasibility of providing the little one with a decent suit of clothes from the resources of the house. Miss Hit was at her wit's end until she happened to think of a piece of fine red flannel, that she had purchased for an underskirt for herself, but which she now determined to sacrifice to Daney's necessities. Miss Hit, Mandy, and Sephy each put a thimble on and went to work, and the result was that on Christmas morning Daney was presented to her guardian in a dress "soft, bright, and warm" enough to suit the captain's taste. And this was the history of "Daney's" adoption, upon which, I fear, I have dwelt too long.



## CHAPTER XII.

## A MYSTERY.

Long years shall see him roaming,  
A sad and weary way,  
Like a traveller tired at gloaming  
Of a sultry summer day.—*Perceval.*

DAY by day Daney improved in health and spirits. Her place was always in the library with the captain, who loved to see the quiet, happy little creature about the room.

And oh! but Daney loved the captain! The lonely old man, who had never known love since the death of his Mary, knew it now. And this love that Daney bore him, taught her a thousand little ways of service and attention that greatly pleased the captain—if they did not substantially benefit him. She was often in the library before he came down in the morning. And often when she saw him coming she would put her baby strength forth, and try to roll his big arm-chair to the fire. She would sit quietly at his feet all day long, watching him read, or write, perfectly contented only to be near him. She knew by his looks when he was going to ring for wood or water, and almost always started up and saved him the trouble. She would watch his countenance as he read. The captain was a sensitive reader, and would drop tears or break into smiles as pathos or humor in the subject moved him. One day he laughed out loud over his book, and Daney, who was watching him, laughed in pure sympathy and then said:

“Oh, wead out loud! Let me hear, too!”

That was just what the captain had always wanted!—a sympathetic listener; though he scarcely expected to find one in such a mere baby. He read out, however. And Daney listened and understood and sympathized. And from that time, whenever the captain came to any very pathetic or very humorous scene that he thought suited to the



child's capacity, he read it aloud to her. And she seemed to understand, appreciate, and enjoy.

One day he said to her :

"Would you not like to learn to read yourself, Daney?"

"Oh, so much!"

"Then you shall," said the captain.

And he took her on his knee and gave her her first lesson in the alphabet from the title page of Rob Roy.

Daney was an apt pupil. Indeed she was older than she seemed. The captain had ascertained from the Drurys that she was really seven years of age, though from her very minute size and her imperfect speech, he had taken her to be only four or five. To teach his little favorite was the captain's most agreeable recreation during that long and very severe winter. Daney progressed so rapidly that before the spring opened she could read fluently and write a little. Her speech was also very much improved; though still, for some reason or other, she found it impossible to pronounce certain consonants. June, with roses, came at length, and the captain and his little child sat upon the front porch, enjoying the glorious weather, the beautiful scenery, and the lovely flowers.

"Oh, grandpa," said Daney, "to think of last year and to think of this! I'm so happy here!"

"And you shall be happier still, Daney, in a few weeks from now. My nephew, Fulke Greville, is coming down here to spend his midsummer vacation. He has not been home for a year before. He is a fine boy, Daney, and will be like a big brother to you. Shouldn't you like a big brother, little Daney?"

"Oh, more than any thing in the world. I should get well and grow tall if I had a big brother to play with me—a tall, strong, rosy-cheeked, black-eyed, big brother, like Well Dun."

"And who is Well Dun, Daney?"



"He came over the great water in the big ship with us. And he cried oysters in the city where we lived."

Daney's memory and understanding were evidently excellent, although her utterance was so imperfect. This was the first time she had ever alluded to her past life; and now, by diligent questioning, the captain made out that Daney had lived in a very large, fine place, before she came over the great water—a place much larger and finer than this even—where the people were very good to her, and where the men servants were dressed like soldiers, and where a flag was hoisted on the highest tower when *grand-père* came. *Grand-père* called her *ma-petite-fille*."

"What was grand-père's name, Daney?"

"Grand-père, nothing else."

"Where was the great house in which you lived?"

"I do not know! It was so long ago. It is like a dream."

"How did you leave that great house, Daney?"

"I do not know. I think I woke up in the big ship with Judy. And I did not know what she said, and she didn't know what I said, and I had to learn to talk over again."

The captain brooded over all this. He thought he saw it all plainly enough now. The child was probably French, and of high rank. She had been, for some inexplicable reason, torn from her friends and her country at three or four years of age. She had gradually lost the little she knew of her mother-tongue, and had learned to speak imperfectly the language of strangers. He could but hope that some chance association of ideas, "striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound," might some time revive in her mind some farther reminiscences of her former life, that might afford a clue to her parentage. Now he reverted to his nephew.

"Such a fine, spirited fellow, Daney! He will put you on horseback, and teach you to ride; and take you in a boat, and teach you to row. And that will bring the roses



to your pale cheeks. You are the palest child I ever saw, Daney."

"Yes; as pale as that," said the child, taking up a white violet, and handing it to him.

On the first of July, Fulke Greville came. He came by the little steamer *Busy Bee*, that plied between Baltimore and the towns and villages on the Chesapeake and its tributaries. And once a week it ran up Cornport Creek, past Fuljoy's Island, to a tobacco depôt, called Creekhead. Upon its present trip it stopped to land Fulke Greville at the island. The captain walked down to meet his nephew at the little pier. Fulke sprang upon the pier, and advanced with a joyous step and a beaming countenance to meet his uncle. He was now about sixteen years of age, a fine, tall, stalwart stripling, dark-skinned, black-eyed, and black haired. He held out his hand, and spoke with eager, gladdened tones:

"Oh, uncle! I have won honor this year! See! here is the Annual Report, and my name——"

"Yes, yes, my boy, I knew you would do yourself credit," said the captain, stopping Fulke, as the latter would have drawn the printed report from his pocket. "But come in now, and get some dinner."

They went on through the thicket and up the lovely slope of the green hill, and through the shrubberies and the flower-garden toward the house. And as they went the captain told his nephew of the little girl that he had adopted. Fulke listened with interest to the simple story; but shrugged his shoulders at his uncle's supposition that Daney was any other than the child of the Drury's, who, he said, were probably servants at the great house of which she had spoken. It had been the novel-reading captain's pleasure to weave a little romance of Daney's life, and now he felt annoyed that Fulke should have brushed it all away, as if it had been a cobweb. But they had now reached the house, and Fulke went to his room, and washed and



changed his dress, and then went down to join the captain at dinner.

"This is Daney," said the captain, presenting a tiny, pale-faced, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired girl to the youth. "And, Daney, this is my nephew Fulke—your big brother that is to be. Speak to him!"

But the child, instead of obeying, or taking the offered hand of the youth, stood staring at him as if she were struck dumb and motionless.

"Why don't you speak to Fulke, Daney? it is very rude to stare at any one in that way, Daney," said the captain.

"Why it—it is Well Dun!" cried Daney, in amazement.

"Who?"

"Well Dun, that came over in the ship with us, and cried oysters in the city!"

The captain looked in perplexity from the boy to the girl, while Fulke burst into a loud, boyish laugh.

"There! now I know him by his laugh. I'd know him by his laugh even if I did not know him any other way! But I know him every way! I know him by his eyes, and his nose, and mouth, and all! I know him just as well as I know Miss Hit, or you, grandpa," said the child, positively.

"Ha, ha, ha! you are mistaken this time, young 'un. I am no fish boy, but Fulke Greville, a long descendant of the celebrated Fulke Greville, who flourished in England, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth," laughed Fulke.

"Oh! Well Dun, how *can* you say so, when I know better! Didn't I hear you cry, 'Fine oysters,' every morning in the city? And there! there's the very mole on your upper lip that Judy used to call a beauty spot!"

"What is the meaning of all this, Fulke?" inquired the old man.

"Indeed, sir, I have not the least idea! I never set eyes upon the child before," replied the boy, with a look of surprise.

"Oh! Well Dun! how can you say so!" said Daney, beginning to cry.



"Come, come, it is a case of mistaken identity! Here's Miss Hit, and we will sit down to dinner," said the captain.

The housekeeper entered, and was duly introduced to Mr. Greville, and then they gathered around the table, Daney often leaving off her meal to gaze spell-bound upon Fulke Greville, until her guardian would have to call her to order.

It was only after the cloth was removed, and Miss Hit had led little Daney away, that the captain and his nephew drew their chairs closer together, and over the wine and walnuts began to examine the Annual Report of the University. There, sure enough, Fulke Greville's name stood high in honor. He had distinguished himself, not only in many branches of knowledge, but also in steady and regular deportment.

"And now, uncle, do you know, I should like to send that to my step-mother. She evidently does not trouble her head about *me*; but I should like her to learn by this report that I am not a worthless scamp, if I *did* run away from school."

"Well, my boy, I think it quite right, upon every account, that it should be sent; but I think that *I* had better send it, accompanied by a letter explaining that I have adopted you, and mean to be responsible for your education and establishment in some learned profession," said Captain Fuljoy.

The letter was written and despatched with the report that same evening.

The next morning Captain Fuljoy, finding himself alone with Daney, said:

"Why did you suppose my nephew to be Well Dun, my child?"

"Because he *is*, grandpa!" said Daney, firmly.

"You are mistaken, dear; this is my own nephew, whom I have known ever since he was born, and whom I have seen at intervals of one, two, or three years all his life."



"You are mistaken, grandpa; he is Well Dun; he came over in the big ship with, and he lived in the same street with us (it was nastier than the shanty), and he cried oysters in the city of a morning. He is Well Dun, grandpa, for there's the very mole on his lip!" insisted Daney.

The captain laughed and patted her head.

"My dear little obstinate Daney, you are crazed upon this point. But now let me tell you, you must not stare at him so, nor call him by any other name than Fulke Greville, for you know, to do so would annoy him."

"Well, grandpa, I will call him any thing you please, but he is Well Dun all the same, only he is better dressed, and so am I."

It was evidently a fixed idea with the child, that nothing could move.

But now came an inexplicable mystery. Return of post brought a letter from Mrs. Greville, the step-mother of Fulke. It was evening, and the captain was sitting in his library with his nephew and the little child. He took the letter eagerly, saying:

"From Mrs. Greville! Let us see what Madam has to say for herself."

He opened the letter and read aloud as follows:

NEW YORK, *July 7th*, 184—

CAPTAIN FULJOY—*Sir*:—I do not in the least understand either your extraordinary letter, or the still more extraordinary presence of Fulke Greville's name in the list of students published in the Annual Report of the University of Virginia. Here seems to be some great error. It is true that about eighteen months since, my step-son, Fulke Greville, in a fit of boyish pride, left the school where I had placed him, and was missing for several days. But so diligent was the search instituted for him, that he was recovered before he had the opportunity of leaving the city, and he is now regularly pursuing his studies at the



New York College. I have augmented his allowance, and otherwise redressed his fancied grievances, and he seems quite happy, and is every thing I could wish. Who the youth may be whom you have taken under your protection I cannot imagine; but if you fancy that I could have left my husband's son to his own devices for eighteen months, as you seem to do, you do not know, sir,

Your obedient servant,

GERTRUDE GREVILLE.

The uncle and nephew stared at each other in blank amazement.

"What in Heaven's name is the meaning of this, sir?" exclaimed the captain.

"The Lord only knows! I do not," replied the youth.

"Are you an impostor then, sir?" demanded the old man, sternly regarding the speaker.

"As the Lord hears me, no!" solemnly answered the boy.

"How can I be, uncle? You yourself, who have been in the habit of seeing me at intervals ever since my infancy, should know my person well."

"So also should your step-mother know the son that she has had with her almost daily for years!"

"Uncle, I cannot solve this enigma, but I repeat that, as the Lord in Heaven, to whom I shall have to give an account of every idle word, hears me speak this night, I am no impostor, but your nephew, Fulke Greville. Test my identity in any way you please! Cross-question me about any events that might have transpired between you and myself, in our numerous meetings, events such as could only be known to you and me. Or go with me to New York and confront me with my step-mother and *her* so-styled Fulke Greville! Uncle, I am no impostor!" cried the youth, with tears of shame and indignation starting to his eyes.

"My boy, I am constrained to believe you, but all this is



very strange. Of course there must be an investigation. I will write again to Mrs. Greville. If necessary, I will go on to see her," said the captain, kindly.

"I said he was Well Dun," thought Daney to herself; but remembering her promise, she forbore to speak her thought.

The captain wrote again and again, but received no farther answer to his letters. And just as he was making up his mind to make a journey to the north, he happened to see, in the list of passengers that sailed on the steamer *America*, for Europe, the names of Mrs. Gertrude Greville and Mr. Fulke Greville.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE OLD MAN'S DARLING.

Heed not though none should call thee fair  
So, maiden, let it be,  
If naught in loveliness compare  
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,  
Whose veil is unremoved  
Till heart to heart in concord beats,  
And the lover is beloved.—*Wordsworth.*

MRS. GREVILLE and her mysterious young protégé remained for several years abroad, extending their wanderings over the greater portions of Europe, Asia, and Africa. And during all this time Captain Fuljoy heard nothing directly from them.

Young Fulke Greville being desired by his self-constituted guardian to choose a profession for himself, decided in favor of that one which, with his aristocratic prejudices, he considered to be the most noble—namely, arms!

Captain Fuljoy, acquiescing in his ward's decision, promptly and successfully exerted himself to procure for



him an appointment as cadet at the Military Academy at West Point, where young Greville soon distinguished himself by his perfect propriety of deportment, his close attention to his class-books and military exercises, and by his rapid progress in both the latter.

Daney remained at home with the old man, ever growing dearer to his affections.

The captain was extremely proud of his adopted heir, Fulke Greville, who certainly repaid his kindness by the most fervent gratitude, and the most earnest endeavors to do honor to his patron.

But the old man was much fonder of his pet child, Daney, who returned his affection with the most devoted love. At first this was a depending and reverential love, but as the years went on, and the old man grew older, and the child grew taller—without losing any of its reverence, it became a tender and protecting love.

Once, when the captain was very ill, and his attendants would not let her stay in the room, she lay on the mat outside his door, with her forehead upon the floor, like some poor faithful little dog, in dumb despair.

Upon another occasion, soon after his convalescence and while he was still very feeble, he and the child crossed the creek in a boat, and walked up the opposite wooded hill to call on their nearest neighbors, the Burnses of Burnstop. As they approached the house, they were met by a furious bull-dog, which came bounding toward them with the ferocity of a tiger, when, with a piercing shriek, Daney sprang forward and threw herself before the enraged brute, as a mouthful to employ his huge jaws, while the old man might get away. But the surprise of her onset, *or the flaming sword of the angel in her eyes*, caused the savage beast to recoil, and before he could renew the attack, the hurrying servants of the house called him off, and Daney was saved. But she had not the less freely offered up her little life for the preservation of the dear old friend whom



she loved far more than her own existence. When asked what she had been *thinking* of when she did such a rash deed, she answered simply:

“I did not think at all; I did it so the dog might take me instead of grandpa.”

I might multiply instances to prove the earnestness, tenderness, and even heroism of Daney's love for her guardian; but let these suffice for the present. But you must acknowledge it was no wonder the captain grew to dote upon this child.

The captain brooded day and night over the future prospects of his two protégés. He had long determined to leave them all his property, except a few small legacies to his needy dependents. But how to divide it satisfactorily between the two he could not decide. He *did* wish to leave his lovely home to Daney, who admired it with so much enthusiasm. But then he thought to give it to the girl would scarcely be just to the boy, who as his adopted heir, had a right to expect the inheritance of the real estate.

The old man was at his wit's end, until at length a bright thought struck him. He would marry the young pair, and then the property need not be divided at all; for both could possess the whole, and both enjoy the same beautiful home in common.

And that they might certainly be united at the proper age, he resolved to begin at once to train them toward each other; thinking—simple old bachelor!—that it might be as easy to do so with them as with the two rose trees each side the entrance of his porch, which he had trained to meet and intermingle their branches overhead. He began his human horticulturing artfully enough. To neither of the young people did he hint such a project as their future marriage. But he took other measures. With a fine tact in seizing fitting occasions, he covertly drew the attention of each to the attractions of the other.



With Fulke Greville he hoped he was succeeding, for the young man often cordially joined him in his praises of Daney, saying :

“ Yes, indeed, she is an excellent girl ; a girl of rare goodness, and genius, and beauty also, if she were not so pale.”

With Daney he feared that he was failing, for she never united with him in his commendations of Fulke. On the contrary, she would droop her head, while the faintest wild-rose bloom would tinge her white cheek.

And the old man mistook the reticence of the maiden for aversion to the subject, and the frankness of the youth for love of it, and he said to himself—

“ I shall have very little trouble in training Fulke toward Daney ; but I shall have to train him all the way round to meet her, for she does not grow an inch toward him, but rather the other way.”

And that was all the old bachelor knew of youth, maidenhood, and love.

Whenever Fulke Greville was home for the midsummer holidays, he gave his time, with a youth's generous ardor, to the amusement, instruction, and improvement of Daney. He took her out to row on the creek, to ride over the opposite hills, or to walk around the beautiful beach of the Island. He was an enthusiastic devotee to the fine arts, and had attained great proficiency both in music and in painting. And it was his delight to instruct Daney in those accomplishments which she could not otherwise have attained, for where could she have found teachers in that out-of-the-world retreat ? It is true Miss Hit had once been a professor of these arts, but Miss Hit's fingers were much too fat and clumsy now to fly over the keys of the piano, or guide a camel's hair pencil. So young Greville was both music and drawing-master to Daney, whom he liked to look upon only as a little sister.

But, alas ! youth turns to love as the roses turn toward the light.



Fulke Greville was now a young man, and when he was in the North, he had the entrée into the best society, where he had made the acquaintance of a rather large circle of young ladies, many of whom he very much admired, and several of whom he could have loved. So he never even dreamed of little, pale, yellow-haired Daney as a bride.

But poor Daney saw no other young man except him. And he was handsome, gay, spirited—and every thing else that she was not. The island was always a paradise, but when Fulke Greville was there it seemed heaven. And when he was away his memory was kept alive by the constant conversations of the captain, to whom the praises of his nephew were the favorite topics. And thus little, pale Daney learned to love her tall, splendid foster-brother with all the strength and fervor of a soul as impassioned as ever burned in the bosom of Sappho.

The captain, biassed by his preconceived opinion that Greville loved Daney and that Daney was averse to his suit, was very long in discovering the true state of the case. But at length even he could no longer be blinded to the truth. Daney's irrepressible joy when Greville came home, her blushing timidity in his presence, and her tearful depression when he was gone, told the old "o'er true tale."

"Why don't the young fellow speak out? He loves her and has at length won her love! Now why the *dee* don't he ask my consent to their marriage? Ah! I see how it is. He thinks I should turn 'crewel parient' and make a row. Well, if he doesn't make up his mind to speak to *me* when he comes home at Christmas, I will save him the trial by speaking to *him*," thought the captain.

And when young Greville came home at Christmas, the captain acted upon this resolution.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE REJECTED BRIDE.

I think death were a better thing  
Than loathed love and marriage ring  
Forced on my life together.—*E. B. Browning.*

ONE day when they were sitting over the wine after dinner, he opened the subject by saying:

“Well, my dear boy! So you are to have your commission in January. Now, why do you not speak out?”

“Speak out, sir?” repeated Greville, in perplexity.

“Yes, and to the point! Oh, I dare say that you think I should be for throwing some obstacle in your way! Nothing of the sort, for nothing would please me better!”

“Indeed, I do not understand you, sir! Speak out? Upon what subject, sir?”

“Upon the subject of *Daney*, you happy dog!” exclaimed the captain, rising in the excess of his good humor, and clapping his hand upon the young man’s shoulder.

“*Daney*? Really, my dear sir, I am more puzzled than ever! What—of what am I to discourse concerning *Daney*?”

“Your marriage with her, man! Your marriage with her!” chuckled the captain.

“My marriage with *Daney*!”

“Oh, yes! you sly dog! You thought the old man’s eyes were blind, and you were afraid to open them! You thought I would turn Turk and forbid you to meet! turn you out of doors; lock the girl up in her room, and all the rest of it! And so you kept mum! But, ha! ha! you dog! I saw it all the time! And now I tell you that nothing would delight me more! And you may marry her to-morrow if you like!” exclaimed the captain, rubbing his hands with glee, and fully expecting that the youth would be transported with joy.



"But here must be some great mistake, sir. I have not the least intention of marrying Daney," said the young man, gravely.

It was now the captain's turn to re-echo the words of Greville. And it was sad to see the look of blank disappointment that settled on his face as he did it.

"'Not the slightest intention of marrying Daney!' Was that what you said?"

"It was."

"Then in the name of all that is just and true and honest and honorable, WHAT were your intentions in seeking her affections?" sternly demanded the captain, returning to his chair, sitting down, and gazing steadily into the young man's face.

"Indeed, sir, I never sought to win her love! There is some serious mistake," protested Greville.

"Don't tell me that, sir! Don't add falsehood to inconstancy! But if you have changed your mind—if you have seen some new face that you like better than hers, say so! and if you have cast my child off for some new favorite, why, black as the sin is, confess it! Do not make it blacker by lying!" exclaimed the captain, indignantly.

Fulke Greville's face flushed crimson. His high spirit took fire at these words. From any other man he would have signally punished them. From his old and kind benefactor he was not even at liberty to resent them. But he had to recollect the captain's venerable age and his disinterested benevolence before he could sufficiently control his anger to reply coolly.

"Uncle, I do not remember ever to have been guilty of falsehood or unfaithfulness in my life. And so far from having cast Daney off for some new favorite, I have no favorite, old or new, *except* Daney."

"Then why the deuse, sir, do you not marry her?"

The young man smiled faintly as he said:

"Because I do not wish to marry her."



"Then, sir, I demand again, WHY did you try to win her love?"

"And I repeat, I *never* tried to win her love."

"This is too base!" cried the old man, throwing himself back in his chair and looking sternly upon Greville—"too villainous. Do I not know better, sir? Have I not watched you, sir? Whenever you have been home, have you not devoted yourself to her? Have you not rode with her, boated with her, walked with her, and read, sung, and sketched with her? Have you not been by her side all day and half the night, during your stay here? Sir—sir—" Here, in the excess of indignation and sorrow, the captain's voice broke down.

"Uncle, yes, I have done all this," said Greville; "but I have done it as a brother for a dear little sister. I liked Daney. I told you so. I was fond of her. And it gave me great pleasure to please her. It was half the delight of *my* holiday to see what a holiday my presence made for her. Yes, I was very fond of little Daney."

"Ten thousand devils! then, as the Dutchmen say, *why*—CAN'T you marry her?" demanded the captain, emphatically.

"Because, well as I like Daney, I feel the utmost repugnance to doing so," said the young man, very firmly.

"But *why*? I ask you WHY? You give me no reason for this silly repugnance."

"What reason *can* I give you, sir? *Who* can explain his own likes or dislikes? I confess that I cannot."

"But then you don't dislike Daney!"

"As a wife I should excessively dislike her!"

"Humph! I think I know where that shoe pinches! Your lordship considers her too poor to be your grace's bride! too humbly born to become your majesty's consort!" said the old man, in a rage of sarcasm.

"No, uncle, that is not the reason, although I should consider her humble birth quite a sufficient objection to our marriage."



"You coxcomb! But let me assure your sublime highness that I believe her to be *well* born—the daughter of some French nobleman—and I have good reasons for believing it! Come, now, my boy!" said the old man, suddenly changing his manner, "I see it all now! You are fond of Daney, but your Norman blood rises up against the idea of marrying a nameless, portionless girl! That is natural. It was certainly very wrong in you to win her affections, without a distinct purpose of making her your wife; but alas! that was natural also! for boys will be boys, and follow their own feelings, regardless where they lead them! I should not have stormed out upon you, my lad, and still less should I have mocked your inherited pride, for which you are no more accountable than you are for your hereditary hair! I should have reasoned with your folly as I am about to do now. Shall we reason together, my boy?"

"With all my heart, dear uncle! believe me, it gives me great pain to be at variance with you!"

"We will not be at variance any longer, Fulke! we will come to an understanding. Now to the point! since you *are* fond of Daney, yet do not like to marry a nameless and portionless girl, I'll tell you what I will do. I will legally adopt Daney and give her my name. I will also bequeath to her this island and estate. Then, surely in social position she will be nearly enough your equal. Even your pride could not revolt at the idea of marrying Miss Fuljoy, the sole heiress of Fuljoy's Isle! Could it, now?"

"It could not!"

"I said so! Oh, it will all come right!"

"Uncle! do not misapprehend me! I told you that it was not Daney's position that I most objected to. And no change in her position could affect my feelings toward her. I love her as a little sister; but I could not tolerate her as a wife! and I could not if she were the heiress of an earldom!" persisted the young man.



"Fulke! Fulke!" said the captain, repressing his rising anger, but betraying his great sorrow in the liquid depths of his tones; "consider, boy! you admit that you are fond of her! You have always shown this fondness! Whether you intended it or not, you have won her devoted love! Oh, boy! boy! take to your own the heart that you have won! Draw her close enough to yourself to learn how excellent a thing is a true maiden's love! Take the rich gift that heaven has offered you, and learn its priceless worth! Take her, boy! You will learn to love her as devotedly as she loves you—more than that you cannot love! Take her, Fulke! You have won her heart! Give her your own!"

"Uncle," began the youth, slowly and sorrowfully, "if this be true—if I have unintentionally won Daney's love, I am deeply grieved to hear it! It will overshadow my whole life with remorse! But not even for this can I forswear myself and sully my honor by marrying one whom as a wife I *could* not love!"

"Boy! boy! how know you that you could not love her? She is so very lovely. Oh, Fulke, listen to me. She is my child; not the child of my flesh, but the child of my affections; dearer to me, I will be sworn, than ever was a daughter to a father before. As a baby she came to me of her own sweet will, and she loved me, and made my lonely home luminous with her presence. She is all love, my—precious child! Fulke! Fulke! my life is centered in her happiness. If she were to be wretched I should die. Oh, boy! if ever I have been kind to you, be kind to my child!"

"Uncle! friend! benefactor! that adjuration would send me into the jaws of death to serve you, but not into dishonor. Oh, can you not see, sir, that it is shameful to wed a woman without loving her? Do you not feel that you are doing a grievous wrong to Daney by making this appeal to me? And would you really have *me* wrong Daney so much as to marry her for mere pity?"



"Yes! for I could trust Daney to inspire you with a higher sentiment in a month."

"Why does she not inspire it now?"

"Because she is just the sort of woman to be more passionately loved as a wife, than as a maiden. It would require the close intimacy of married life to develop all her worth! Marry her from any motive you like—only marry her, and I will trust in heaven and in Daney for the result."

"Uncle, I cannot! It is best to bring this painful interview to a close. Let me be very plain with you. You thought it was Daney's position I objected to, and you generously offered to improve it. And though I confess her position would in itself have been an objection, yet there was a greater one still in her person. Uncle, examining my feelings now for the first time, I find that it is her person that repels me. I could never fancy, as a wife, so pale a girl as Daney! Forgive me that I have spoken so plainly. Your importunity made it necessary," said Fulke Greville, gravely.

"Yes, Daney is pale! pale as a pearl! And a pearl she is, too, of great price, did you know how to value her! So this is your final answer, sir?"

"Uncle, it must be."

"Don't *uncle* me, you villain!" cried the veteran, the suppressed fire of his anger bursting into flame. "I am no uncle of yours, and never was! No, thank heaven, not a drop of my blood runs in your veins! And now, Mr. Fulke Greville, if you *are* Mr. Fulke Greville! (for I begin to doubt that questionable fact), I must beg you, at your earliest convenience, to seek quarters in some house more worthy of your honorable presence, and more agreeable to your fine feeling than, I fear, I can make this."

Fulke Greville arose and stood before his guardian, saying, sorrowfully:

"Sir, you have spoken angrily, and therefore unjustly.



But I agree with you, that for all reasons I had better leave the house at once. I shall endeavor to forget the painful scene of this evening, and remember only the great kindness that I have received at your hands, and the happiness I have enjoyed in your house. And so, sir, I wish you good-by!"

The captain was shaken by a variety of contending emotions—shame, pride, sorrow, anger, love—all warring together in his heaving bosom.

"Fulke!" he uttered, in a choked voice, "I cannot ask you to stay; but—if—at any future time—you should change your mind—and come here and ask me for Daney—I will try—to forgive you!"

The young man bowed deeply, and withdrew. In crossing the entrance hall, he laughed softly to himself, exclaiming:

"Why, if I could possibly be weak enough to marry that girl for her fortune, I should certainly be wicked enough to murder her for my freedom!"

Ah! how little did he think that, softly as these words were murmured, they were overheard!—that lightly as they were uttered, they would one day fall heavily upon his own doomed head. The same night he packed up his portmanteau, and left the island by the "Busy Bee," that passed at nine o'clock.

Daney was amazed at the suddenness of his departure; but was told by the captain that he had gone to Washington, to see about the lieutenant's commission that he expected to receive immediately. And this was true so far as it went.

Early in January, Fulke Greville received a lieutenant's commission in a regiment ordered for active service on the Indian frontier.

And when Fulke Greville departed for his distant post of duty without ever having returned to bid her good-by, Daney's tender heart was almost broken. She wept in se-



cret, never appearing in the presence of her guardian until she thought all traces of tears were washed from her face. But her grief could not be hidden from the eyes of love that were watching over her.

“‘Too pale,’” said the captain, looking at this fair, drooping human blossom, who, though sixteen years of age, was still all of one color—pale face and pale yellow hair. “This must and shall be amended. She must have a change of air and something, also, to engage her thoughts.”

And acting upon this resolution, the captain packed up, left the house under the care of Miss Hit and the servants, and took his child up north to the State of Vermont, and placed her in a first-class establishment for young ladies, that was situated in the Green Mountains, and celebrated equally for the excellence of its educational system, and for the salubrity of its atmosphere.

The captain, who was confined to no spot, whose home was ever where his heart was, took a little cottage in the immediate vicinity of the school, so that he could see his child whenever he pleased, and she could have a home of her own to come to every Saturday afternoon to stay until Monday morning. And once established in his pretty cottage among the mountains, the captain's spirits rose mightily.

“If Daney's mind and body both don't gain strength here, the deuse will be in it,” said the captain. And then his heart relented toward his banished nephew. “And, poor boy,” he said, “I was wrong to have quarrelled with him so rashly, and he alone in the world! I should have trusted to time to bring all right. But ah, dear me! old age has brought me gray hairs without wisdom, it appears.”

And so he wrote to his nephew, frankly expressing his regret at their misunderstanding, retracting all pretensions to his hand for Daney, and begging that they might unconditionally resume their old relations of uncle and nephew.

In due course of time came Lieutenant Greville's answer, full of affectionate gratitude.



And thus the correspondence was resumed. Daney's name was seldom mentioned. "How is my little sister?" Fulke would sometimes inquire. And "Daney is quite well" would be the answer. Indeed the correspondence, though very friendly, was very rare between the veteran, who was unused to the pen, and the young officer, who was continually moving about from fort to fort on the distant, unsettled, Western frontier.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### ASTREA.

What heavenly smiles! O lady mine,  
Through my very heart they shine;  
And if my brow gives back their light,  
Do thou look gladly on the sight;  
As the clear moon, with modest pride,  
Beholds her own bright beams  
Reflected from the mountain's side  
And from the headlong streams.—*Wordsworth.*

THREE years passed away. Fulke Greville spent them among the frontier forts.

It was a period of comparative peace, when there was nothing more stirring than an occasional skirmish with the disaffected Indian tribes, and when, consequently, promotion was very slow in the army.

Yet, for some signal service rendered in a perilous encounter with the renowned Camanche chief, Wickahonickah, and his fierce warriors, our hero was so highly commended by his superior officer, in his despatches to the Secretary of War at Washington, that his friends soon had to direct all letters intended for him to Colonel Fulke Greville.

The young officer was himself made the bearer of the despatches, giving an account of this affair, and recommending him for promotion.



He arrived in Washington early in February, at the height of the fashionable season, when the city was overflowing with the élite of the whole nation. The beauty, talent, wealth, and fashion of the North, South, East, and West were gathered here in a focus of splendor. The hotels and boarding houses were crowded to excess, and the Avenue, on a fine day, rivalled in display the celebrated Boulevards of Paris. Fashionable amusements were rife, and plays, operas, concerts, lectures, balls, and masquerades daily and nightly offered themselves to the choice of the embarrassed visitor.

Colonel Greville's despatches were a sufficient introduction into the best society of the metropolis. And as soon as he had concluded his business at the War Department, and established himself comfortably at "Brown's," he gave himself up to social life, with the intense enjoyment of a young man long absent from its pleasures.

In the midst of his round of fashionable dissipation, however, he found time to write to his uncle, who was now living upon the island, informing him of his recent promotion, and asking, carelessly, "How is my little foster-sister?" And in a few days he received an answer, warmly congratulating him upon his rise in rank, which the writer declared had been bravely won, and would be gracefully worn; and answering his question by saying—"Daney is well."

One night, Colonel Greville went to the National Theatre to see a celebrated English tragedian who was fulfilling an engagement in Washington, and upon this occasion was to appear in the character of King Lear.

This was the first time Colonel Greville had been in a theatre for three years. And he enjoyed it as a long fasting man would enjoy a feast. He had purposely chosen a seat in the front row of the dress circle immediately before the stage, so that he could have a panoramic view of the audience as well as of the actors. For the audience in



itself was a rarely delightful spectacle to a young soldier fresh from a three years' hermitage in a frontier fortress.

The house was full, and the dress circle was sumptuous in its display of well-dressed women in all the splendor of velvets, silks, and satins, feathers, flowers, and gems. Colonel Greville's glance roved over this parterre of beauty as a bee over a field of flowers, uncertain where to rest. Suddenly his roving eyes became fixed, riveted, spell-bound to the face of a young lady sitting with the French minister's party in a private box, on the right-hand side of the stage.

"Who is that radiant creature sitting between Monsieur and Madame de Coucy?" at length he inquired, turning to an acquaintance who had just taken a seat beside him.

"I have been around the house asking that question of everybody, and no one knows. This seems to be her first appearance in society. She is some new arrival from Paris, I fancy. Probably a daughter or niece or younger sister of Madame. If I had the slightest acquaintance with the French Minister's lady, I would drop into her box, with the hope of being presented to Mademoiselle," said Captain Gedney, the party addressed.

Colonel Greville was more fortunate. He *had* a slight acquaintance with Madame de Coucy, and he had in his pocket at that very moment a card of invitation to a ball to be given by her on the approaching Wednesday. But he would have hesitated long before intruding into her private box. But this was only the scruple of a very fastidious nature. And although his gaze was strongly drawn toward that box, he was careful to withdraw it before it was observed by the occupants.

And she upon whom he gazed was indeed a "radiant" creature. He had used exactly the right word in describing her. Some beautiful women are like flowers. This girl was like a star! Her form was of the pleasing middle height, but softly rounded out to the fullness of health and beauty. Her features were faultless as ever were those chiselled by



Grecian artist as his ideal of perfection. Her complexion was of dazzling fairness, kindling into a vivid bloom upon the cheeks and lips. Her rich golden hair sparkled like fire. Her deep blue eyes radiated light! She wore a dress of rich *moire-antique*, and diamonds blazed upon her snowy, rounded bosom and arms, and amid her golden hair.

In all his life he thought he had never seen, or read, or dreamed of such resplendent beauty. And by an association of contrasts his mind reverted to Daney—the little, pale, dim girl that his uncle would have forced upon him as a bride—and he laughed!

The play was about to commence. The curtain slowly arose, and the court of King Lear was revealed. The great tragedian who assumed the principal character for the evening was greeted by an enthusiastic round of applause. As soon as the tumult subsided and the performance commenced, all eyes were turned toward the scene—all except Colonel Greville! I fear the great artist received but little notice from him. For now that the beauty was gazing upon the stage, *he* could gaze at her without offence.

When the curtain fell upon the first act, the box of Madame De Coucy was surrounded by gentlemen who lounged there with the evident intention of being presented to Mademoiselle. And the “star” was encircled by a galaxy of satellites. She received all who bowed before her, with the dignity, grace, and perfect self-possession of a Queen. In truth, she looked like a Queen accepting the homage of her court.

Colonel Greville’s heart burned with envy. Yet as a too recent acquaintance of Madame De Coucy, he would not venture to go around and join her circle. This, as I said, was only the fastidious hesitation of a young man who had been rustivating in the Western wilds for three years past.

When the curtain rose upon the second act, the gentlemen surrounding Madame De Coucy and her fair companion bowed and withdrew—only to resume their attendance at



the next interlude of the drama. And Colonel Greville breathed a deep sigh of relief, and again rivetted his eyes upon the beauty while she fixed hers upon the stage. And thus it went on through the whole evening.

At length the curtain fell upon the death of Lear. The successful artist was vociferously called out, made his speech, received his meed of applause, and bowed himself off. Then Madame De Coucy and her party retired from the house.

"Heavens! She is gone! And I feel as if all the gas had been turned off!" exclaimed Captain Gedney.

Colonel Greville turned fiercely around. He felt as if he would like to annihilate the speaker. To *him* it seemed as if the sun had set. He had gazed upon this radiant beauty until he was dazzled, bewildered, intoxicated. The pleasure of the evening was all over—the past was a dream, the present nothing, the future, the golden future, every thing, as offering the one transporting hope of meeting her again—meeting her at Madame De Coucy's ball on Wednesday evening! Like one walking in sleep, he left the theatre and strolled down the snow-clad, moon-lit avenue to his lodgings.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE CHOSEN ONE.

This bridal wreath! no ruder crown  
 Should deck that dazzling brow;  
 Or ask yon halo from the moon—  
 'Twould well besem thee now

I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;  
 I crown thee queen of me!  
 And oh! but I am a happy land  
 And a loyal land to thee.

I crown thee, love; I crown thee, love;  
 Thou art queen by right divine!  
 And thy love shall set neither night nor day  
 O'er this subject heart of mine.—*Festus.*

WEDNESDAY evening came. All the rooms on the first floor of Madame De Coucy's house were thrown open to her company. The saloons were beautifully decorated, brilliantly illumined, and well filled. Not crowded, for the hostess had too much good taste to invite more guests than she could agreeably entertain, and thus turn an occasion of pleasure into one of discomfort. The rooms were cool and spacious. The elegant toilets of the ladies were displayed to advantage, for they were not lost in a confused press. The dances were delightful, for there was space to move about in.

At ten o'clock Colonel Greville was announced, and he immediately advanced to the spot where Madame De Coucy stood to receive her guests. He made his bow, and was graciously received by his hostess.

Near them, but with her back turned, stood his angel! Her face was quite averted; but he knew her by her sparkling, golden hair, and the ineffable grace of her head and neck and falling shoulders. She was receiving the homage of a bevy of admirers.

Madame De Coucy laid the tip of her white gloved finger upon the beauty's arm, saying, in a low voice:



"Ma belle." The young lady turned. "Permit me to present to you Monsieur le Colonel Gréville. Monsieur, Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie."

There was a low bow on the gentleman's part and a slight curtsy on the lady's, before they looked up at each other.

Yes! there she stood, the glorious young creature! more radiantly beautiful than ever, her dress more chastely elegant than before. It was a dress of transparent white lace over a skirt of shining white satin. Wreaths of lillies, gemmed with the dew drops of small diamonds, festooned her skirts, and rested on her bosom, and crowned her golden hair. As their eyes met there flashed into her lovely face a look of—What? Joy? Recognition? This was scarcely possible, yet it seemed very like it! What could it mean?

In a voice low, and vibrating with emotion, he asked if he could have the honor of Mademoiselle's hand for the quadrille that was then forming.

She was engaged for that and for the next half dozen. But she would promise Colonel Greville her hand in the eighth dance.

She had scarcely given him this unsatisfactory answer before her hand was claimed for the present quadrille, and she was led off to the head of the set.

And as he watched her floating, lightly floating through the dance, it seemed to him as if her motions made the music, and she herself were some fair spirit wafted down from a brighter world, or some seraph ready to ascend to heaven.

So, you see, he was very far gone in the madness called love.

Dance after dance! Her hand was never disengaged nor her feet weary. Would she never be free? And was he to wait there forever, attending upon Madame De Coucy, and watching the beauty floating away with other gentlemen?

At length, at the end of the fourth quadrille, there was an interlude for refreshments.



She was led back to the side of her chaperone by her partner, Captain Gedney, who had somehow manœvered successfully to get a late invitation to this ball, with the especial purpose of seeing the beauty.

He now lingered by her side, officiously fanning her and talking a deal of rubbish. At least so thought the exasperated Colonel Greville.

At length, however, the band struck up the music for a waltz, and the captain bowed himself off to find his partner for that dance.

Then Mademoiselle De Glacie, turning to Colonel Greville, said :

“You met me quite as a stranger. And I really do not think you know me yet.”

He looked at her in astonishment. And all the blood in his body rushed to his heart, as she said :

“I am Daney.”

You might have levelled him with a feather ! Daney ? What——

This beautiful, resplendent creature ; this blooming and radiant Hebe, with her fair roseate complexion, her full ruby lips, her shining golden hair, her sparkling sapphire eyes—was *this* the once pale, dim, fady little Daney ? This glorious girl, arrayed in all the splendor of rank and wealth, and surrounded by the élite of the town—was *she* the lately poor, obscure, and nameless little Daney ?

This reigning belle, this queen of love and beauty, for whose beaming smiles the proudest in the land were suing—could she *ever* have been the wretched little Daney, whose love he had despised, and whose hand he had rejected ?

Oh, what an error !

“Mea culpa ! mea maxima culpa !” he might have exclaimed from the very depths of his soul ! for ah ! how much more deeply men repent of their luckless mistakes than of their profitable sins !



He was utterly overwhelmed and confounded; he could not find a word to say; he heartily wished the earth would open and swallow him! he was even glad when, the instant after she had spoken, and before there was need of his reply, a gentleman stepped up and, apologizing for unavoidable delay, claimed the honor of her hand for the quadrille then formed, and waiting only for her to begin.

"I see you did not recognize me," smiled Daney (or Astrea, as we must henceforth call her), as she moved away to join the dancers.

Recognize her, indeed! How on earth should he recognize one so entirely transformed in person that neither outline, form, color, nor expression were the same?

The outline of Daney's features had been sharp; those of Astrea were curved. Daney's complexion had been as pale as a crocus; Astrea's was blooming as a rose. Daney's form had been fragile as a fairy's; Astrea's was softly rounded out to the fullness of health and beauty, like a Hebe's. Daney's expression of countenance had been subdued and saddened; Astrea's was beaming and joyous. Daney had been a miserable little beggar, rescued from an Irish shanty; Astrea bore one of the haughtiest names of Normandy! He had left Daney in the most secluded of all rustic homes; he found Astrea amid the blaze of fashion in the metropolis!

How, indeed, should he recognize her until she revealed herself to him? Then truly, through all these external transformations, he *did* recognize the same frank, warm, pure, and good-hearted little Daney!

But whence came these transformations? It was time and training, of course, that had developed and improved her person. But whence the change of name and position? Could the old captain's romantic conjecture, that she was the child of some noble French family, really have proved true? Yes! that must be the solution of the mystery! He had scarcely arrived at this satisfactory conclusion,



when the quadrille was finished, the music hushed, and Mademoiselle De Glacie was led back to her place.

He had now quite recovered his self-possession—and what helped him to that recovery was the instinctive feeling that Astrea could not possibly know any thing about his rejection of Daney. He was, therefore, now able to address her with his usual suave and stately courtesy:

"This has been a delightful surprise to me, Mademoiselle," he said.

Astrea bent gravely in acknowledgment of the compliment. Then looked up archly, saying only with her speaking eyes:

"You did not *seem* so very much delighted, Monsieur?"

He understood that humorous glance, and replied to it:

"I was, indeed, speechless with astonishment." Then slightly changing the subject, he said: "I hope, Mademoiselle, I may congratulate you on a reunion with your family?"

"My family?" she echoed, with a puzzled look.

"I presume the favorite theory of my uncle, in respect to yourself, has proved a true one?"

Still that perplexed, unconscious look.

"You surely know to what I allude?—the early reminiscences, the chateau, the grandpère, the flag tower——"

A ray of intelligence illumined her dancing eyes, a silvery laugh parted her rosy lips, as she answered:

"The *chateau-en-Espagne*! Oh, no, you are not to congratulate me on any thing of the kind!" Then, gravely and coolly, she added: "But this is not the scene in which to revive those subjects."

"One word—you have not, then, discovered"—he paused, and Astrea replied:

"I have discovered nothing—except that Colonel Greville is quite unconscious that he is submitting me to a cross-examination."

Rebuked, and by little Daney! Truly the world *was* turned upside down!



"Mademoiselle, you will kindly pardon my rudeness. I have been in the backwoods for some years past, and may have lost what little of civilization I ever possessed," he said, with freezing politeness.

Daney was by no means frozen by his coldness. She bowed and smiled in good humored acknowledgment of the correctness of his observations, and the next instant gave her hand to a foreign ambassador, with a name and title a yard and a half long, who came to claim her hand for the schottische, and soon they—the ambassador and the beauty—were entwined, and tripping down the room in that most provoking and exasperating of all dances, especially when it is danced by your own lady-love with some other gentleman!

"My very dear fellow, what ails you? Are you ill? what is it, tooth-ache? neuralgia? come into the refreshment room, and take a glass of brandy, and it may relieve you," said Captain Gedney, coming to his side and noticing the fierce anguish of jealousy that Greville was unconsciously betraying in his ingenuous countenance.

"I am not ill? Who——"

"Then never scowl like that in society. The melodramatic is at present out of fashion!"

"I do not pretend to fashion; I am just from the backwoods. But who is that insufferable puppy waltzing with Mademoiselle De Glacie?"

"That insufferable puppy is His Excellency Senor Don Salvador Sebastiano Mario, Modeno Aspos y Nono, Count de los——"

"There! that will do——"

—"Terros, Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary from the court of Brazil to the cabinet at Washington! You wish to know who he is. There, that's who he is at full length."

"I wish he were garroted!" burst forth Greville.

"And so do I! but it will not do to express that wish in



such energetic language. By the way, I have heard this evening that he is affianced to Mademoiselle De Glacie. I should think it quite likely. Those gipsy-looking Spaniards do wonderfully affect fair-haired blonde beauties. Oh! I say! really, now, you *must* have the face-ache! Let me bring you something."

Colonel Greville turned abruptly, and walked away. It was too hot in the dancing room. He went into the conservatory. It was too close there. It was too hot and close everywhere! He felt suffocated. He rushed out into the garden to calm himself under the quiet stars, to cool his fever in the fresh air.

So she was to be married! She whom he now loved so passionately that the idea of her union with another suggested suicide as the only relief for himself from the torture of living to know it! She who had once loved him so truly that he might have made her his very own, had he had the sense to value her. She whose love he had slighted and despised until it was lost to him forever. Truly he was the swine of the Scripture parable; the chanticleer of Esop's fable. Like that sapient beast and fastidious bird, he had cast away a precious pearl, not knowing its priceless worth.

He would have left the scene of festivity at once, only he was bound by an agreement to dance the eighth quadrille with her. He therefore returned to the house, where he found the company all moving toward the supper room. Astrea was conducted thither by Senor Don, etc. Of course, that was to be expected. With a profound sigh, he gave his arm to Madame De Coucy, and followed in their wake.

The weary supper was over at last. The promised quadrille with her was danced—the first and last that ever he would dance with her, he secretly swore! What! trust himself to dance with her again, amid all the delirious fascination of melodious sound and motion, and she the



promised bride of another? Never, the trial was too great. At the close of the quadrille he led her to the side of Madame De Coucy, lingered only so long as etiquette prescribed, and then bowed and retired. He resolved never to see her again, but, despite the attractions of the metropolis, and his own long leave of absence, he determined to return to the frontier fort where he held command.

The next morning he arose from a sleepless bed and feverish pillow, hoping to find, amid the active business of the day, that forgetfulness which he had failed to find upon his couch at night. He packed his trunk and portmanteau, and was in the act of making his toilet for a round of farewell morning calls, when his door was unceremoniously opened, and in walked—Captain Fuljoy!

“My dear uncle!”

“My dear boy!”

These were the first words of greeting on each side, as both hands of uncle and nephew met in a double shake.

“When did you arrive?” inquired Greville.

“Why, *now*; just at this moment, I may say! Came by the ‘Busy Bee’ to Baltimore; took the train to Washington, and here I am! Breakfasted?”

“No, sir.”

“Then we’ll have it together now, at once! You know I always breakfast at eight. It is now eleven, and I have not broken my fast yet! To the d—— (I was going to say) with fashionable hours!”

*Observe*, since the captain had left off sea-service, he had left off swearing; he never swore now, but always was a-going to! In other words, he swore as much as ever, through the force of habit, but always remembered to add the saving clause—“I was going to say.”

Colonel Greville rung and ordered breakfast for two, which was accordingly served in the adjoining parlor.

When they were comfortably seated—



"Seen Daney yet?" inquired the captain, with his mouth full of ham.

"Yes, sir, twice; but not under that name," answered Greville, anxiously, feeling sure that now at least he should solve the mystery; for since Daney had acknowledged that her parentage had never been discovered, the change of her name filled his mind with wonder and conjecture. But to his disappointment and mortification the captain merely answered—

"No, certainly not under that name," and continued his long protracted meal in silence.

When his appetite was at length quite satisfied, and the tedious breakfast was at length quite over, the captain wiped his mouth and gray moustaches, and with a sigh of intense satisfaction, leaned back in his chair, and inquired—

"What do you think of Daney, *now*?"

"She is surpassingly beautiful! More beautiful than any human being I ever saw before! Much more beautiful than I deemed it possible that Daney ever could become."

"My man!" said the captain, significantly—"three years ago Daney was but in outline—a mere faint pencil sketch by her Creator; now she is that sketch filled out, colored, finished. That is all. She is still the same Daney. But man, man, he is a poor artist who cannot see the beauty of the finished picture in its first faint outlines!"

"I know it, sir! I know it, and I am that poor artist; for, ah! I never found out the value of *this* picture until it was too late! until it was bespoken for another gallery than mine!" sighed the colonel.

"What do you mean? Leave metaphor, even though I *did* set the example of using it, and speak literally."

"Then I never appreciated the real worth of our Daney until she was lost to me forever!"

"Well! you have left metaphor only to speak in riddle. What do you mean now?"



"Daney, Astrea, I should say, is the promised bride of another."

"Hem! Of whom, if you please?" coolly inquired the captain.

"His Excellency, Senor Don Salvador——"

"Etc., etc., etc. I know the lubber! Who told you so?"

"Common rumor."

"As if you did not know common rumor to be a common story-teller! Bosh! She is no more going to marry him, than I am going to marry the Queen of Morocco!"

"Are you sure, sir?" exclaimed the young man, with breathless eagerness.

"Certain. Daney's hand is free."

"And—her affections?"

"Well, sir! remembering what passed between you and me upon that subject three years ago, I consider your question rather of the ratherest."

"Uncle! do not mock me! I love Daney! love her, aye! to my own perdition, should her affections be otherwise engaged!"

"Well! don't lay violent hands upon yourself yet awhile! Nor upon me either!" added the captain, seeing that his nephew, in his excitement, had started up and confronted him.

"Is she free in heart and hand?" passionately demanded the young man.

"Free in heart and hand, I do firmly believe!—Yet stay, I spoke too fast. I fear she is not quite free in heart——"

"Oh, sir! in mercy! what are you about to tell me!"

"Why, you see, Daney is not quite perfect any more than any other human being is. She has a soft spot in her head like the rest of her sisterhood. And that soft spot is where the memory of her boyish playmate melted the brain."

"Does she remember me with kindness? Oh! if I thought she did, or could, I should almost die with joy."



"Softly, my dear fellow, softly. Do you wish to marry Daney?"

"*Wish to marry her! Wish to marry that peerless creature?* Sir, I would almost barter my soul's salvation to call her mine."

"Stay, let us understand each other. Daney is in better health and spirits, and is better educated and better dressed than she was three years ago; she has also a prettier name, and mixes more in society. That is all. Her position and prospects are in no degree changed from what they were."

"I know it, sir, though her change of name led me to suppose so. But may I inquire if that name is her own?"

"Her own, sir! Of course, it is her own!"

"Then De Glacie was her family name?"

"No. I know nothing of her family. It is her baptismal name. Let me explain. Soon after you left us, three years ago, I was having the ruins of that fisherman's cottage, which was blown down in the gale, cleared away. Among the rubbish was found the lid of a leather box. Upon it was a brass plate, bearing an inscription that was nearly illegible from rust. I had it cleaned, and then read clearly the name, ASTREA DE GLACIE. At the same time, the bishop of the diocese was visiting our parish for the purpose of confirming our young people. Now Daney was one of the candidates for confirmation, but we were not sure, you see, that Daney had ever been baptized. And such a good churchman as myself was not going to chance *that*. So, to make sure, we had her baptized before confirmation. Miss Hit and myself stood sponsors. And right or wrong, we gave her the name of Astrea De Glacie. So, if it is not hers by birthright, it is by baptism. We hoped that the name might be some clue to the discovery of her friends, supposing that she has any in the world beside ourselves."

"Have you heard any thing of the Druries since they



left Cornport?" inquired the young man, taking advantage of a pause.

"Not one word, though I have caused inquiries to be made for them. Soon after the rites of baptism and confirmation were performed for Daney, I took her to a Northern school among the mountains of New England, where she remained two years and a half. It was there that she developed into such a fine woman. I then took her to Europe, where we spent three months in travelling over the continent, and three in the city of Paris. I introduced her everywhere as Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie, hoping, you see, that there, at least, the name might lead to some discovery. It was in Paris, at the house of our minister, that we first met Monsieur and Madame de Coucy. Our acquaintance grew into intimacy during our three months' sojourn in Paris. And our intimacy ripened into friendship, when fortune made us fellow-passengers in the Baltic, when he was coming out as minister to this government, and we were returning to our native country. During that trip, Madame de Coucy grew so much attached to Astrea that, upon our arrival at Washington, she begged as a favor the young lady might be left in her charge for the season. Well! I knew that Astrea could not enter metropolitan society under better auspices. So I left her to the chaperonage of Madame De Coucy, while I ran down to the island to see how the home ship was working; found all right under the command of first mate Hit, and then, feeling lonesome for the want of my little Daney, I just boarded the Busy Bee as she passed on Tuesday morning, and here I am. For you see I cannot exist a week without my little Daney, so if they wish to keep Mademoiselle Astrea for the whole season, I'll be d——d (I was going to say) if they don't have to take *me* too!"

"One word—does Madame know her real position in your family?"

"How can I tell? Madame met us in the first circles of



Paris, and so no question as to Mademoiselle's position could possibly arise. She knows her to be my ward. That is sufficient. And that, I think, is all we shall ever know of her! for Greville, I think that my first idea of her being other than she seemed might have been all moonshine! So if the least hope of finding her out to be some great French demoiselle influences your feelings toward her, give her up at once."

"I will never give her up, sir! And I am truly glad to believe that she is no other than she seems. I adore her as she is."

'Well, my boy, no one can attribute your change of sentiment toward her to mercenary motives at least! Go on and prosper! Woo the girl as soon as you will—wed her as soon as *she* wills. Nothing would please me better! Only I'll be d——d (as I was going to say) if you must separate her from me."

The delighted young man reassured his uncle upon this point. And soon after they left the house to call on Madame De Coucy and Astrea.

The young lady received her guardian with unfeigned delight, and met her lover with something very like a half-conscious blush.

This visit of mere ceremony was necessarily a short one. But as Colonel Greville's intended journey was indefinitely postponed, it was soon repeated.

Fulke Greville was an impatient lover, and took the earliest opportunity of declaring his passion to its beautiful object, and entreating her to become his wife.

But to his amazement and consternation, he found his suit, backed as it was by the influence of her guardian, and urged as it was with all the eloquence of youth and love—promptly and firmly rejected.

"No, Colonel Greville, I will not marry any one, least of all, you," she replied, sadly, but firmly.

"Least of all me! Oh, why should I be consigned to a



deeper and more hopeless perdition than all others?" he exclaimed, in the bitterness of unmerited despair.

She did not answer, until he put his question in another form—

"Why do you make an exception of me, Mademoiselle?"

"Because, Colonel Greville, you are the proudest man I ever had the honor of meeting, and I—am nobody! or less than nobody!—an impostor, who has no right to the place she fills; no, nor even to the very name she bears!"

"Astrea, dear Astrea, do not talk so wildly. You tax me with being proud! Ah, love, I shall be prouder still when I call you mine! You say that you have no right to the place you fill? Do not so wrong our noble-hearted guardian as to think that *his* adopted daughter could possibly be considered an intruder into the circle she so much adorns. The name to which you also disclaim any right, is yours by the most sacred of all patents—that of baptism."

"I have no family name," said Astrea, mournfully.

"Nor do you need one! I offer you mine! Oh, Astrea, let no fastidious scruple, either of pride or humility, mar our happiness!"

Vain were all his pleadings. Astrea resolutely rejected and left him.

"The girl is absolutely mad, mad!" exclaimed the captain, when the result of this proposal was laid before him—"mad as a March hare! You love her, she returns your love; I give my consent, and she—rejects you! Well I suppose it is poetic justice! You rejected her three years ago; she rejects you now. It was nothing but caprice in you; it is nothing but caprice in her. Never was an unfortunate guardian so tormented with fools as I am! Well! I suppose you will both condescend to come to your senses some time or other, and then come to me for my blessing! And then it will be *my* time to be capricious. And I'll be dashed, I was going to say, if I don't forbid the banns!"

Of course, the old man meant to keep his word, and in



proof of such intention he trotted off immediately to Madame De Coucy's, asked an interview with his ward, and reasoned with her so soundly, and pleaded with her so eloquently, and commanded her so peremptorily, that at length Astrea was compelled to do what from her heart she had wished to do all along, and consent to become the wife of Fulke Greville. And another interview with her lover, the next day, quite settled that matter.

Captain Fuljoy announced the approaching marriage to Monsieur and Madame De Coucy. And the latter begged that the marriage might take place from her house, and also offered to select Mademoiselle's *trousseau*.

The captain gratefully acceded to these proposals. And the preparations for the marriage were commenced.

It was at eleven o'clock in the forenoon of a lovely spring day that the bridal party left the mansion of the French minister for St. George's church, where they were met by the bridegroom and his attendants, and where the marriage ceremony was performed. The whole company then returned to the mansion, where Madame de Coucy entertained them at an elegant breakfast. After which the bridegroom and the bride set out for Fuljoy island, where they were to pass the honeymoon in retirement, and where Captain Fuljoy was expected to join them in the course of a few days.



## CHAPTER XVII.

ETTA BURNS.

She envies neither great, nor wealthy,  
Poverty she'll ne'er despise,  
Let her be contented, healthy,  
And the boon she'll dearly prize:  
So let the world wag as it will,  
She'll be gay and happy still,  
Gay and happy! gay and happy!  
She'll be gay and happy still!—*New Song.*

It was a glorious day—that first of May! Never had the verdant island, the broad river and its wooded banks, seemed fresher, gayer, or lovelier.

The forest trees of the shore and the isle were now clothed in the vivid emerald-green foliage of early spring, and reflected in water as clear and pure as the brightest mirror.

Within a shaded creek on the southern side of the island, a little boat with snow-white sails was moored. It had just arrived from Cornport, with certain luxuries and elegancies for the occasion. And oh! but everybody in the little seaport town must have known what was going on at Fuljoy's Isle that day.

Within the mansion-house all was in a high state of bustle, getting ready for the reception of the bridal party. This was the day after the wedding, and the happy pair were expected to arrive in time for a late dinner. Preparations were therefore being made upon a great scale; the house had been newly furnished, and decorated in elegant style. And the last finishing touches were now being made, under the supervision of Miss Mehitable Powers.

Miss Hit limited her labors to the exertion of moving slowly from room to room, sinking heavily into easy-chairs, and sighing forth her instructions to the troop of eager, excited housemaids that attended her. To Miss Hit, a



maiden lady of advanced years, marriages, even under the most favorable circumstances, seemed, to use her own words, "scandalous." She thought that for any young man to ask any young woman to marry him, was an extremity of impudence only to be equalled by that of the young woman in accepting him. And now for *her* to be required to make preparations to receive such a pair! Truly, her spirit was wounded within her. Yet to do this seemed a part of her duty as housekeeper, and whatever Miss Hit undertook as a duty, no matter how distasteful the task might be to herself, was always conscientiously and thoroughly done. She had waddled through the house about nine times that day, and was about to commence her tenth and last tour of inspection, when, suddenly, without rapping, Etty Burns danced into the hall! Etty Burns, the black-haired, black-eyed, red-cheeked little niece of old Major Patrick Burns, of Burnstop.

"Oh, Miss Hit, I have come to see the rooms before the wedding party arrives! You will show me through them, will you not?" exclaimed the breathless girl.

"Bless my life and soul, Etty, how you do startle me! Why how, ever, did you get across?"

"Why, rowed across, of course; did you suppose I swam?"

"You'll drown yourself, some day; I say it and I stand to it. I wonder at Major Patrick to let you run on as you do!"

"There, now! I didn't run! I *rowed*, I tell you! But, now! show me through the rooms, that's a dear, good Miss Hit."

"Show you through the rooms! humph! yes! and put all sorts of thoughts into *your* head! humph, well, I suppose they would come there all the same!" sighed Miss Hit.

"You may make your affidavit to that!" assented Etty.

"Humph, ha! well, it wasn't so when I was young!"



"No, for people had no rooms to think about; they dwelt in tents in those antediluvian days! Come away, and let's see the suite."

"Oh, Etty, what a shame your grandmother don't take you home!"

"My grandmother is o'er auld to be fashed wi' the likes o' me."

"Oh, Etty, Etty, how your education has been neglected. The *likes* of you! But come along, if you must see the house, you must, I suppose."

They were now standing in the hall, and Miss Hit opened the door on the right hand side, and displayed the drawing-room, in its splendid new suit of furniture, all blue and silver—blue satin damask curtains faced with silver, and draped with inner hangings of lace; blue velvet sofas, and ottomans, and easy-chairs; silver chandeliers to match; and, finally, a Brussels carpet, with blue hare-bells running over a silvery-white ground. The room was decorated with flowers, wreathed around the chandeliers, festooned over the tops of the mirrors, and grouped in vases upon the mantel-pieces, and centre and side tables.

Etty, who had never seen any thing better than the plain, old-fashioned farm-house furniture at Burnstop, was in raptures at all this finery, among which she would have loved to linger had not Miss Hit opened a communicating door, and introduced her into a pretty little morning-room, the hangings and furniture of which were maize-colored silk.

They then crossed the central hall, opened the door on the left hand, and entered the dining-room, the walls of which were covered with the finest pictures—some were originals of celebrated living artists, and others excellent copies from the old masters. In the midst of the room stood the dinner-table, covered with the snowy damask that swooped to the carpet, and decorated with Sevres china, Bohemian glass, silver-gilt ornaments, and bouquets of flowers.



An exclamation of delight burst from Etty—

“Oh! it is a perfect altar of beauty, even now! And how splendid it will be when it is lighted up! And oh! what a pity to spoil such a beautiful piece of work with common-place eating and drinking.”

“La, child! it will not be common-place, wholesome eating and drinking, I wish it was! Bless you, the captain has sent down a French cook and confectioner, who have prepared fancy dishes enough to poison the whole of Ahasuerus’ army,” said Miss Hit, leading the way into an adjoining music-room, whose furniture and hangings were green and gold.

“As if there was not green enough on the outside, in all conscience,” carped the irritated old lady.

But Etty was a thorough-going admirer, thinking every new apartment that she saw more elegant than any she had already seen.

“But now, Miss Hit, take me up-stairs and show me Astrea’s room. I am dying to see Astrea’s own room,” said Etty, eagerly.

“Astrea’s room! Bless the girl! Why Astrea has a long suite of rooms! Time was when one private apartment served to accommodate one lady; but now-a-days no less than four seem to be required.”

“Four!”

“Yes,” said Miss Hit, leading the way up-stairs to the great central hall on the second floor, upon which all the chambers opened.

“This is Astrea’s sleeping-room,” she continued, as she introduced her visitor into a spacious chamber immediately over the drawing-room.

It was a very bower of beauty. The hangings of the windows and of the bed were of white lace over rose-colored silk. The paper on the walls and the carpet on the floor were of a corresponding pattern—red roses running over a white ground. The dressing table was also draped with



white lace over rose-colored silk. Rich draperies of lace were hung over the glass and festooned back with bunches of roses. Upon the table stood an elegant dressing case of mother-of-pearl, with all its interior fixtures of Bohemian glass and wrought gold. An easy-chair and foot stool of rose-colored velvet, draped with tidies of white crotchet-work, stood near at hand. The French windows in front opened upon an upper balcony, where stood large marble vases filled with roses.

While simple Etty would have lingered in ecstasy among the pretty toys of this room, Miss Hit hurried her on to the adjoining apartment in the rear, which was Astrea's dressing-room, and which was elegantly fitted up with white and green enamelled wardrobes, bureaux, tables, and wash-stands, and a Sevres china and silver toilet service, and thence on into Colonel Greville's dressing-room, of buff and white, and finally into his bed chamber of rosewood furniture and purple hangings. These four rooms were all in a line running from front to back, and communicating with each other by connecting doors. Each room had also a door opening upon the central hall, and windows commanding a westerly view, through the side of the house. It is necessary so minutely to describe the locality, that the reader may fully understand the events that are to follow.

"That is all," said Miss Hit, as she passed out of Colonel Greville's bedroom into the hall, near the head of the back stairs. "And now, Etty, I really must go and dress to be ready to receive the wedding party. To be sure, it is early, but then there is no certainty about the time of the arrival of the boat! It may be, any day, two or three hours before or after its time!"

But Etty kept close to Miss Hit; followed her up into a front chamber of the third story, and assisted her in arraying her stout form in a straw-colored silk dress, with three deep flounces, that made her look stouter than ever. Then Etty walked out upon the upper balcony, and looking down the creek, exclaimed, suddenly:



"The boat is coming, Miss Hit! She is just turning Cornport Point, and entering the mouth of the creek."

"Then she will be here in fifteen minutes," answered Miss Hit, hastily adding a Maltese lace collar and undersleeves to her dress, and then calling to Etty, and hurrying down stairs to the ground floor, where she was met by all the house servants, who, having also seen the boat, were hurrying toward her to receive fresh orders.

"Seph! Mandy! run to that French fellow in the kitchen, and tell him that dinner must be on the table in half an hour; so if there is any thing yet to be done to his entremets of sea-nettles and frogs and other reptiles, he had better do it," said the old lady, as she sailed on to the dining-room to give a last look at the table.

"Sea-nettles! Do the French eat sea-nettles, Miss Hit?" inquired Etty, in horror.

"Yes, dear, and snails, and frogs, and toadstools, and black beetles, for aught I know! And one thing is certain: I shall not venture to touch any thing for dinner, except an honest joint that I can see all about, for fear of being poisoned. I am sure, I don't wonder at revolutions and reigns of terror, when we think of what they live on!"

"Miss Hit, I don't envy your dinner party! but I will just go down and hide myself in the shrubberies until I see the bride land, and then I will slip away home. Good-by."

"Good-by, dear! I have no doubt we shall have you and the major over to dinner some day soon; but you see, for the first week or two, the young couple wish to be quiet."

"Yes! I hope they will send away the French cook before they invite us, however," said Etty, dancing away.

She went down to the south extremity of the island, where, hidden among a group of rose-bushes, she watched the Busy Bee as it steamed toward the landing-place on the island. It came on very swiftly, and at length stopped at the mouth of the small creek immediately below her



post of observation. Here, while the boat was blowing off her steam, the bridal party landed, attended only by a man servant and a lady's maid.

The bridegroom and the bride advanced up the shaded avenue, followed by their attendants bringing travelling bags and dressing cases.

The stately bridegroom, in the uniform of his regiment, walked on, supporting the steps of his bride, and trying to conceal, under a grave and dignified exterior, the real pride and joy of his heart, that would nevertheless betray itself in the expression of his frank and noble countenance.

The lovely bride wore a travelling dress, mantle, and bonnet, all of silver gray silk of the same shade, with gloves, parasol, and bonnet strings of delicate mauve. In the retirement of this shaded walk, her light lace veil was thrown aside, and all the beauty of her downcast eyes and blushing cheeks revealed, as she supposed, only to the trees and flowers.

"Oh! what a glorious gift to woman is beauty! It gains for her every thing else she needs to make her life happy. Ah! I would be willing to die young, if only while I live I could be as lovely and as beloved as she is!" said Etty to herself, as she peeped through the rose-bushes at the beautiful young bride.

But she who spoke possessed in her soul of fire a more potent spell over minds and hearts than ever was wielded by mere beauty.

Etty waited until the bridal pair had passed out of sight, and then glided through the bushes to the sands where she had left her little row-boat, unmoored, got into it, and rowed away from the island.

And while Etty's little skiff glided across the placid waters, and the Busy Bee steamed its way up the creek, the bridal party reached the mansion-house.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM.

Gentle lovers shall ye be,  
Sitting by each other's side,  
She giving her whole soul to thee  
Without a thought or wish of pride,  
For she is now thy cherished bride.—*Lowell.*

THEY were received upon the front porch by Miss Hit, all flounces, flaxen curls, and smiles.

"You are welcome home to Fuljoy's isle, Colonel Greville. Mrs. Greville, you are welcome. I wish you both much joy in your future lives," she said, shaking hands in turn with the bride and bridegroom. "Your luggage is already carried up to your apartments. Would you like to be shown thither before dinner?" she added.

"If you please Miss Hit. And remember that to you I am always little Daney," said the bride.

Miss Hit had already sent the lady's maid up-stairs, under the charge of Mandy. And now the old lady led the way thither, and opening the door, introduced the bride into her elegant chamber.

An exclamation of pleasure broke from Astrea's lips as she threw herself into her easy chair before her dressing table, and gazed around upon the pretty room with its hangings of rose-colored silk and fine lace.

"Oh, how good is my dear guardian, and how perfect is his taste," she said.

"Bless you, child! it was not the captain's taste. He sent down an upholsterer, with a *carte blanche*; the man knew his business, and you see the result. But the captain *has* taste; there is no denying *that*. And now, ma'am, I will leave you to change your dress, while I go and have the dinner served," said Miss Hit, leaving the room.

Mademoiselle Fifine, Mrs. Greville's French maid, was



in the adjoining dressing-room, engaged in unpacking trunks and boxes, and putting away their contents in bureaus and wardrobes; but summoned now by her mistress, she came in and attended her at her toilet.

The young bride's evening dress was very simple and elegant, consisting of a fine white tulle, whose ample folds floated around her fairy form like clouds of gossamer. A necklace of pearls reposed upon her snowy bosom; bracelets of pearls encircled her fair arms, and a coronet of pearls gathered the rich tresses of her hair at the back of her head, where they fell a cataract of golden ringlets. When her toilet was complete, even to the delicate white gloves and the white cobweb of a handkerchief, she stepped through the French windows of her chamber out upon the piazza, to look once more upon the lovely home of her childhood. The aspect was a Southern one.

Before her lay the slope of the island, reposing in sunshine and in shade, and studded over with trees and bushes and flowers, and descending to the water side; then the broad water reflecting clearly, as the brightest mirror, the wooded hills beyond and the evening sky above. East—sky and water and wooded hills wore the sober gray hue of approaching night, lighted purely by the silvery moon; west—they shone in the gorgeous livery of the setting sun, in purple crimson and gold. The exceeding beauty, glory, and sublimity of the scene, almost suspended in ecstasy the breath of the beholder. While Astrea gazed, entranced, she heard a light step beside her, felt a soft hand upon her, and turned to see her husband by her side. There they stood,

“Gazing—the one on all that was beneath—  
Fair as herself—but the boy gazed on her—”

until the scene slowly changed under the fading sky, and the last crimson tint of the retiring sun had died away, leaving the moon to reign alone in the cold, gray heavens.

Then they went down to the dining-room, where, bride



and bridegroom though they were, they did full justice to the luxurious feast spread before them. How passed their evening? In music, conversation, and moonlight walks upon the terrace. Then, weary with their journey from the city to the isle, they retired to their apartments. And not until then did the tired household seek repose.

Miss Hit waddled around in her last tour over the establishment to see that the doors and windows were closed, and all the lights and fires put out. And then, attended by her two maids, Mandy and Sephy, she entered her own room on the third floor front, where she sank panting into an easy chair.

These two girls always slept in the garret above Miss Hit's room; but it was the custom, growing out of her solitude, of the old lady to detain them a few minutes every night in her own chamber, for a little gossip or last orders, before dismissing them to their own. You may be sure that this evening proved no exception to the general rule. There was much to be talked over. And as Miss Hit sat blowing in her chair, Mandy offered to comb her hair and Sephy to take off her shoes and stockings, before leaving her. And while the maids were thus engaged, Miss Hit spoke—of the bridal pair, of course. For let it be remembered that this was the first time for three years that the household of the isle had set eyes on either the lady or the gentleman.

"She's wonderfully improved—Miss Astrea—Mrs. Greville, I should say," said Miss Hit.

"I 'clar' I shouldn' a-known her, mum," answered Mandy.

"No, nor Marse Fulke—the Colonel, I mean. Isn't he handsome, just?" observed Sephy.

"I hope it will be a happy marriage," sighed Miss Hit.

"And so does I, mum; but I has my own thoughts," said Mandy.

"La! why shouldn't it be happy? Just see what a handsome pair they are!" observed Sephy.



But Miss Hit had turned an appalled countenance upon Mandy, as if silently demanding a reason for her expressed forebodings.

Mandy was a well-formed, tall, slender girl, with a good-humored black face, laughing black eyes, and smiling lips that displayed rows of teeth white and smooth as ivory. There was a great deal of wit, intelligence, and affection in Mandy's nature. And her truth, honesty, and fidelity won the regard of the whole family. It was therefore with much confidence that Miss Hit listened to her explanation.

"You see, Miss 'Hitable, mum, I never said nuffin 'tall to nobody 'bout what I'm going to tell you now. You 'member de last ebening as eber Marse Fulk was here, afore he went away so suddint?"

"Yes I do. And I knew at the time there was some quarrel between him and his uncle, though nothing was ever said about it afterward."

"Well, mum, it *was* a quarrel, and all about little Daney, Miss Astrea, I mean, Mrs. Greville, as I *should* say. You see, mum, dat dat ebenin' I was busy taking de candle grease spots out'n de carpet in de hall nigh to de dinin' room, when I heard all they said, which I neber mentioned of it afore, and wouldn't mention it now only for my misgivings."

"What was it?"

"Well, you see, ole marse, he wanted young marse to marry Miss Daney. She was Miss Daney then, so I might as well call her so. Well, he—young marse I mean—*wouldn't*. And ole marse *coaxed* him, and he wouldn't. And he *scolded* him, and he wouldn't. Then he *threatened* him, and he wouldn't. Last of all he turned him off and ordered him out of the house, but told him as he was a-going, that if ever he changed his mind, and come to his senses, and returned to marry Miss Daney, he would forgive him and love him and leave him his fortune. And so they parted. Only mind this, Miss Hit, mum. As young



marse was a passing through the front hall on his way out, and not seeing of *me* down on de floor takin' out de grease spots, he say, says he, a-talking to hisself, 'If I were weak enough to be tempted to *marry* that girl for *fortune*, I should be wicked enough, afterward, to MURDER her for FREEDOM!'"

"Hush! for heaven's sake, hush! You make my very blood run cold with horror! Beside, it cannot be true! You mistook!"

"'Deed and 'deed, mum, dem was the very words he used! I 'members of 'em as if it was dis minute I heerd 'em, for it seem like ebery word was *cut into* me, I was so hurted! And oh! Miss Hit! to think at last as he has been tempted to marry of her for fortune! now supposing——"

"Ugh! stop supposing, you foolish, wicked girl! There! give me my nightcap, and go to bed. Say your prayers before you lie down, and then, perhaps, the evil spirits that put such horrid thoughts in your head will depart from you," said Miss Hit.

Sephy, who was a bright mulatto, a few years older, a good deal stouter, and much more regularly handsome, without being near so pleasing as her sister Mandy, now took up the word, saying—

"I haven't got nuffin' 'tall agin 'em, but der making of a bridge of my nose, by going and taking up a triflin' French gal 'stead o' me, for a lady's maid, which it's well known I was allus 'tended by ole marse for to be own maid to young missus! And then Marse Fulke to go and take that sojerin' fellow to wait on *he*, 'stead o' Brudder Bill as allus 'tended to him, ebber since he war a boy! Tell you all what, no good will ebber come o' *sich*!"

"Hold your tongue, Sephy! How dare you talk so of your young mistress and master? Go to bed, directly, both of you, and pray for a better spirit. And mind, be up by seven o'clock in the morning to help the cook. There's



batter to be made for the waffles—Maryland waffles, mind you, and not French ones—to be made of rich milk and eggs and flour, and not gas and fluff and vapor—so do it yourself, and don't leave it to Monsieur le Chef," said Miss Hit.

The girls looked at each other and giggled, as they often did, when scolded by the big, fat, good-natured house-keeper, and then, with a curtsy each, they withdrew to their attic.

"I don't know what is hanging over me to-night; I feel very low, somehow; quite as if something was about to happen; it is an awful experience: it must be a presentiment of evil, or else, perhaps, it is only—indigestion!" sighed the old lady, as she turned into her comfortable bed.

But she could not compose herself to sleep. With a nervous irritability unusual to one of her phlegmatic temperament, she lay awake, starting at every slight sound—and fancying that she heard stealthy footsteps in the porch beneath her windows and before the apartment of Mrs. Greville. Thus it was near daylight when at length, worn out with watching, she fell asleep.

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## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE LOST BRIDE.

You yet may spy the fawn at play,  
The hare upon the green;  
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray  
Will never more be seen.—*Wordsworth.*

THE household was astir very early the next morning. The spacious breakfast parlor was situated on the first floor, in the angle of the house, and had two French windows opening east and two opening south, to let in the light of



the rising sun, the beauty of the landscape, the fragrance of the flowers, and the songs of the birds. The floor was covered with straw matting, the windows draped with white muslin, and the breakfast table spread with snow-white damask, laden with white Sevres china, and adorned with a bouquet of lilies. Every thing about the room was cool, airy, elegant, and inviting.

Miss Hit, entering the apartment, expressed herself satisfied with the arrangement. But as the first freshness of the morning passed away, the sun went round toward the south windows, the dew exhaled from the flowers, and the songs of the birds were hushed, and still the young couple did not make their appearance, Miss Hit grew impatient.

"The breakfast will not be fit to eat, that is all!" said the old lady, in an irritated tone of voice, as she walked up and down the hall, for a half hour longer.

At length, calling to a passing servant, she said, impatiently:

"Mandy! just step up-stairs and notice if you see a door open, or any signs of life up there!"

Mandy tripped softly up the stairs, and soon returned, saying:

"Colonel Greville is in his dressing-room, and the door is wide open, and he must be nearly ready to come down, for he is just brushing of his hair, and his soldier-servant is holding of his coat, ready for him to put it on; and young missus's door is ajar; but I don't hear her stirring."

"Then tell that Ma'amselle Fifine to carry up hot water to her room," said Miss Hit.

Mandy went down to the servant's sitting-room with this order; but "Ma'amselle" declared that she dared not intrude into her mistress's chamber until she heard her bell ring, that it was against all rule. And Mandy came back with the reply to Miss Hit.



"She is a French fool! and that is the worst of all fools! Take the water up yourself, Mandy," said the old lady.

Mandy obeyed the order, and was soon seen passing softly up the stairs with a large silver pitcher in her hands. But in less than two minutes afterward a succession of ear-splitting shrieks were heard, and Mandy rushed down the stairs, every feature of her face distorted with horror.

"What is the matter? What on earth ails the girl?" exclaimed Miss Hit.

But instead of answering, Mandy seized the old lady round the waist, hid her face for a moment against her fat bosom, and uttered shriek after shriek!

"Are you frantic, girl? Stop screaming, for goodness sake, and say plainly what ails you?"

But Mandy's shrieks were only changed for hysterical gasps, and she replied not a word.

"Have you broken any thing costly? If so, tell me at once. You'll not be hung for it you know, anyhow!"

But the girl was really quite incapable of answering, and with a few more choking gasps she sank upon the floor.

"Go up-stairs and see what has occurred. And you, Mandy, come out of this in one minute. You know I won't allow hysterics!" said Miss Hit, angrily.

In obedience to the housekeeper's command, and in curiosity to see what costly vase or looking-glass was shivered, Sephy flew up-stairs, but presently rushed screaming down again, and fled through the open hall door out of the house!

"They are both gone frantic together," cried Miss Hit, in consternation; then, seeing the French maid, who had been drawn thither by the piercing screams, standing in the hall, she added:

"Ma'amselle Fifine, if that is your name, Colonel Greville has been in his dressing-room for the last hour. Go at once to your lady's chamber, and see what has happened there."

The French maid either did not dare to disobey this per-



emptory command, or else she might have been moved by curiosity to know the cause of the outcry, or both motives might have actuated her at once, for at any rate she also hastened up the stairs; but soon rushed down, her face blanched with horror!

"Now, Ma'amselle, no screams nor hysterics, if you please. I won't have them! Tell me at once—is it the Venetian mirror or the Etruscan vase?"

"*Madame il est mort!*" screamed the girl.

"WHAT?" echoed Miss Hit, in affright.

"It is death! it is *m-u-r-d-e-r!*" answered the French-woman, throwing up her arms and prolonging the last word to a perfect howl of terror.

And at the same instant, also, Mandy found her voice, and began to shriek:

"Oh, my missus! my poor young missus! As ebber I should lib to see de day. My poor murdered young missus!"

But no one attended to her. With one impulse of horror and affright all rushed up the stairs and into the bridal chamber!

And there, in that fatal room, a scene met their eyes that baffles all description—a scene calculated to turn each gazer into stone! Yes, the chamber bore the dreadful signs of murder, and of that awful struggle for life that must have preceded the murder. The bed had not been occupied. It was undisturbed, neat and smooth as when its draperies had received the finishing touches of Mandy's neat fingers. But every other piece of furniture bore the marks of a violent contest, as though the victim, flying through that circumscribed space for dear life, had caught at each article in turn to make it a shield or a weapon. Every thing was torn, defaced, and blood-stained! The dressing table had been wrenched from its place, and its lace valance, half dragged off, bore the marks of gory fingers. The easy chair had been thrown down, and on its white cover glowed the prints of crimson hands. The lace



curtains of one window were stripped off, and its folds partly glued together where they had been clasped by bloody fingers. And so with every other article in the room.

“Oh, Heaven of mercies! what is the meaning of all this? Where is Astrea? Where is Colonel Greville?” cried Miss Hit, in wild affright, as she hurried to the open window from which hung the rent and spotted curtain. This window opened upon the upper porch, from which steps led down to the shrubberies. Miss Hit, followed by all the domestics, hastily passed through it, and looked in turns around, half fearing to discover the murdered body of the victim bride. She found the window sill, the floor of the porch, and the steps leading down to the shrubberies, all thickly spotted with blood! The shrubberies themselves, were beaten and trampled down, and a furrow ran through them from the foot of the stairs toward the water’s edge, as though some inanimate body had been dragged along! and oh! worse than all, hanging on the thorn bushes on each side, were shreds of muslin, as if torn, in passing, from some woman’s dress. Fearing to pursue this furrow any further, lest her eyes should be blasted by some sight of even greater horror, the appalled woman hurried, as fast as age and fat would permit her, up the porch stairs again, calling wildly on the name of Astrea, and calling in vain. On reaching the chamber, she rushed through all its signs of crime, to the back door connecting it with the lady’s dressing-room; but this she found was fastened on the same side; this scarcely surprised her at the time, she so quickly unlocked it and passed through, hurrying on toward the gentleman’s dressing-room, whose door was also fastened on this side. Quickly shooting back the bolt, she rushed into the presence of Colonel Greville, who was quietly in the act of receiving his fresh pocket-handkerchief from the hands of his valet. He turned in some surprise to meet the horror-stricken countenance of the old lady, exclaiming:



"What is the matter, Miss Hit? Are any of the maids in hysterics?"

"Oh, Colonel Greville! Oh, Fulke! Where is Astrea?" gasped Miss Hit.

"Astrea! my wife! what about Astrea!" exclaimed Colonel Greville, in sudden alarm, striding toward the communicating door of their apartments.

"Stop, Fulke Greville! she is not there! as you must know too well! I ask you where she is? Cain! where is thy sister? Murderer! where is thy victim?"

"Miss Hit! 'murderer?' Are you mad? or what is the meaning of all this?" cried the Colonel, sweeping her from his path and striding through all the suite of rooms until he stood, the centre of a group of affrighted servants, in the midst of the defaced and blood-stained chamber.

"In the name of Heaven what is all this? My wife! where is my wife?" exclaimed the shocked and terrified husband, as with a face white as one of death, he gazed around upon the bloody tokens of guilt!

"Where? we ask *you* where, murderer! hypocrite! monster! that you are! where have you hidden her dead body?" shrieked Miss Hit, frantic with rage, grief, and despair.

But without heeding her wild appeal, the frenzied man rushed past the group of panic-stricken servants and through the ragged and gory window out upon the porch, where the trail of blood met his appalled gaze! Following this, he rushed down the steps and through the beaten shrubberies, and along the leafy furrow, toward the water's edge.

Meanwhile Miss Hit, though plunged in the deepest despair, recovered self-control sufficient to take upon her self the direction of affairs and to give her orders with sufficient clearness.

"He ought not to be suffered to leave the island. John, do you hurry down to the beach, take the boat, and go across the water to Burnstop. Major Burns is a justice of the peace; tell him what has happened here, and ask him to



come over immediately, and bring as many constables as he may think necessary! Hurry."

John flew to do her bidding. And then she turned to another man servant—

"James, call the coachman and the gardener, and take them with you and make a thorough search for the body through the island. Hasten!"

James rushed out to execute these orders.

"Mandy, you must remain in this room with me, for I shall stay here to watch that nothing is changed until the magistrate arrives."

Mandy immediately left the group of awe-stricken servants and went and stood behind the chair of her mistress.

"And now, Monsieur," she said, addressing the French cook, "you will please to take all these people away with you and keep them in order, until the arrival of the magistrate."

The Frenchman testified his obedience by a succession of bows, and beckoned his attendants to follow him from the room.

When Miss Hit was left alone with Mandy in the fatal chamber, she leaned back in her chair and closed her eyes, as if to shut out the scene of blood around her.

Monsieur le Chef had no trouble in keeping the servants in order; they crept down to the lower regions of the house, where they remained in panic-stricken silence, or spoke to each other only in terrified whispers.

The coachman and the gardener, with their assistants, were beating the bushes in every direction, searching for the body of the murdered bride, or some indication of its fate. Colonel Greville, in an agony of grief, was flying about the island on the same quest.

Things were in this condition when Major Burns, accompanied by a brother magistrate, who happened to be staying at his house, and also by a pair of county constables, arrived upon the scene of action.



Colonel Greville rushed to meet them.

"What is all this, Greville, they tell me? It cannot be true!" said Major Burns, a little, red-faced, gray-haired, fiery Irishman.

"It is true!" cried the Colonel, with a groan of anguish.

"But surely you don't mean, really that—that—" gasped the little magistrate, in consternation.

"She—my bride! my wife! has been murdered! assassinated! in her room!" exclaimed Colonel Greville, wildly.

"Great Lord of Heaven! by whom?"

"We do not know! Would to Heaven we did!"

"Where is her body? Show it to us! And Mix! run and fetch the coroner at once!" exclaimed the magistrate, addressing first the bereaved husband, and then one of the attendant constables.

The man started in a run upon his errand, but was immediately recalled by a distracting gesture from Colonel Greville, who said in a despairing voice—

"It is useless! quite useless! her body has been carried off, and concealed or destroyed."

"Great Heaven! when was this done?"

"Last night!"

"Last night? *And where were you at that hour, sir?*"

Colonel Greville started at the question. The voice that put it was a strange one. He looked up at the questioner. He was a stranger—being a tall, well-proportioned young man, with good features, fair complexion, yellow hair, and blue eyes.

"Oh!—this is my brother-magistrate—rather a young man for the office—but an efficient one, for all that! I should have introduced him before, but really the shock of this affair drove every thing else out of my mind! Mr. Erlingford—Colonel Greville," said the major.

Mr. Erlingford very slightly lifted his hat, keeping his eyes steadily and almost insultingly fixed upon the face of his new acquaintance.



Colonel Greville bowed. He had no hat to lift; he had rushed wildly from the house without one.

"You say that the body has not been found? How can you be so sure, then, that a murder has been committed at all," queried the little major.

Colonel Greville started again! An expression of sudden hope flashed from his face for an instant, and then faded away again as he groaned forth the answer—

"Oh, sir! the evidences of the crime are but too conclusive!"

"I would ask, sir, where *you*, the natural protector of your bride, were, last night, while this crime was being perpetrated?" meaningly inquired Mr. Erlingford.

For an instant the instinct of habitual pride caused Colonel Greville to lift his eyes in haughty astonishment at the insolence of this demand; but in the next, the rushing consciousness of his awful bereavement overwhelmed this feeling, and again he groaned in answering:

"I must have been in my own apartment, not in hers; I would to Heaven I had been!"

A smile of derisive incredulity passed over the younger magistrate's face as he said:

"Rather an incredible story, under the circumstances, sir."

Again the fire of pride flashed up for a moment from Fulke Greville's soul, but again it was quenched in his great sorrow.

"Come! let us hurry on to the house! Perhaps after all there has been no murder done, and it is all a false alarm!" spoke the little major, hopefully.

They walked on up the broad, elm-shaded avenue to the house, and proceeded at once to the fatal bridal chamber.



## CHAPTER XX.

## THE BLOODY HAND.

The sky was pale; the cloud a thing of doubt:  
Some hues were fresh and some decayed or duller!  
But still the bloody hand shone strangely out  
With vehemence of color!

The bloody hand, that with a lurid stain  
Shone on the dusty floor a dismal token,  
Projected from the casement's painted pane,  
Where all beside was broken!

The bloody hand, significant of crime.  
That glaring on the old heraldic banner,  
Had kept its crimson, unimpaired by time,  
In such a wondrous manner!—*Hood.*

HERE all paused in the centre of the room, and looked around. A feeling of deadly faintness came over the strongest man present. Had the body of the victim only been missing, there had been no proof of crime. But there was no mistaking the awful language of those bloody tokens! Murder had been done! And there had but too evidently been a violent and protracted struggle between the victim and the assassin! The overturned chairs, the dressing table wrenched from its place, the white draperies of the room rent away by the clutch of crimson fingers, the blood-sprinkled walls, the blood-stained floor, all cried aloud to earth and heaven of the desperate struggle for life that had preceded the violent death.

The magistrate stood dumb with horror and amazement for some minutes. Mr. Erlingford was the first to break the spell.

“Here has been no *silent* assassination. She was not murdered in her sleep, or even in her bed! You all perceive that *that* has not been disturbed! She was evidently first struck while sitting in that easy chair, previous to retiring! She must have been struck from behind, and in starting violently up, overturned her chair! And observe



how we can track her steps by her blood, as she fled for life from the chair to that door, from the door to the dressing table, from the dressing table to the window! See the prints of her small fingers on the curtains as she grasped them! Oh! here must have been a fearful struggle before life was yielded!—here must have been heavy falls and piercing shrieks that were heard all over the house. Did no one hear them?" inquired the young magistrate, in conclusion.

"No, sir, I did not," simultaneously answered each one that was present.

"Miss Powers, did you hear no disturbance in the night?"

"None, but a very slight noise in front of the house below my windows, which might have been made by a cat passing."

"Yet, judging by these signs, the conflict must have been loud and alarming! Where do you sleep, Miss Powers?"

"In the room above this."

"Do you sleep soundly?"

"I usually do; but last night I was nervous and wakeful, or I should not have heard the slight sound that I did. I am sure if there had been such a struggle as you speak of, I should have heard it, for I did not get to sleep until nearly sunrise."

"Does any one sleep in the rooms *below* these?"

"No, sir; they are the drawing-rooms."

"Who sleeps on this floor?"

"No one but Colonel Greville and his wife, that was!" answered Miss Hit, with a burst of weeping, for her nerves had been quite overtaken.

"And you tell us, sir," said the magistrate, turning and addressing himself to the colonel, "that you did not pass the night in your wife's chamber last night?"

"I did not," moaned Fulke Greville.

"Will you tell us where you *did* pass it?" significantly inquired Erlingford.



"In my own dressing-room."

"Humph! But, passing over, for the present, the singularity of the circumstance of your doing so, allow me to ask—does your dressing-room communicate with this chamber?"

"Certainly, though there is one intervening apartment—my wife's dressing-room; but all communicate by doors, my chamber being the back one of the *suite*."

"And you say that, with but one room intervening between you? you heard no unusual noise in the night?"

"Not the slightest."

"Humph! Look around upon these signs of struggle and violence, and tell me if you think such a desperate conflict could have gone on without your hearing it—without every one in the house being aroused by it?"

"No, certainly, not! The noise that must have attended such a struggle must have been loud enough to have aroused the heaviest sleeper in the remotest part of the building."

"Then how do you account for the fact that neither yourself, who was removed but one room off, nor any other person in the house seems to have heard any unusual sound?"

"I cannot account in any manner for any thing that has occurred in this fatal event," replied the colonel, in despair.

"Let Mrs. Greville's maid be called up," said Mr. Erlingford.

A messenger immediately started in search of her. But here the elder magistrate spoke up:

"It seems to me, Erlingford, that we are proceeding very irregularly in the investigation of this affair. There has been a most heinous and atrocious murder perpetrated, and we are proceeding to examine the servants of the house, by taking their mere statements unsupported by oath. This should not be."

"I beg your pardon, sir: you have had more experience upon the bench than myself. Pray take the direction of



this investigation, and conduct it as you see fit. I will give you all the assistance in my power," replied Erlingford.

Major Burns picked up the overturned easy chair, drew it to a writing-table and seated himself, saying to one of the constables:

"Mix, you can play the clerk upon this occasion. Take pen and ink and make notes of the present condition of this chamber and its furniture."

Mix seated himself, pen in hand, and began carefully to glance around and rapidly to take notes.

The magistrate, turning to the other constable, said:

"Hudson, clear this room of every individual except my assistants and Colonel Greville. Then assemble all the household in the next room, from whence I can send for each witness as I may want him or her. Let no one leave the house upon any pretence whatever."

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE INVESTIGATION.

Hear thou and hope not—if by word, or deed,  
Yea, by invisible thought, unuttered wish,  
Thou hast been ministrant to this horrid act,  
With full collected force of malediction,  
I do pronounce upon thy soul—despair!—*Maturin.*

HUDSON immediately obeyed the command of Major Burns, as given at the close of the last chapter. The room was cleared of all persons with the exception of the two magistrates, who were seated at the table, Mix the clerk, who was busy writing, Hudson the constable, who kept the door leading into the adjoining room where the household were assembled, and Colonel Greville, who was



walking distractedly up and down the floor. The examination proceeded.

"We will hear Colonel Greville's evidence first," said the presiding magistrate.

The elegant little Bible, the bridal present that lay upon the disfigured dressing table, was brought forward for the purpose, and the oath administered to Colonel Greville.

Mix, who had got through taking notes of the condition of the room, prepared now to take down the evidence in writing.

"Colonel Greville, will you tell us at what hour you last saw your wife alive?" inquired the magistrate.

"At about half-past ten o'clock last night."

"Where and under what circumstances?"

"In the drawing-room of this house; we had passed the evening together, and at about ten o'clock we had a glass of wine and some fruit. Her maid soon after appeared with a taper, and she arose and retired. That was the last time I saw her in life."

"Did you part amicably?"

"Most amicably, of course; but it was no parting; as I expected to follow her, and *did* follow her in a very few minutes."

"And yet you say that you passed the night in your own dressing-room. Have you any objection to explain that circumstance?"

"None at all, so far as I understand it myself. My wife had been gone, as I said, but a few minutes, when my own servant appeared and said 'your apartments are ready, sir.' I went to my dressing-room, dismissed my servant, and threw myself for a moment into my arm-chair. Gentlemen!" said the colonel, looking solemnly from one to the other—"I am on my oath, were it not for that, I should think it necessary to assure you by my honor as an officer and a gentleman, that the extraordinary circumstance I am about to state is strictly and literally true!—that from



the moment I threw myself into my arm-chair, a profound sleep overcame my senses, and I knew no more until I awoke very late this morning and found myself still seated in the same chair!"

The magistrates looked at each other and at the witness—Major Burns' honest countenance expressing unmeasured astonishment, Mr. Erlingford's exhibiting scornful incredulity.

"You can retire, if you please," said the latter.

Colonel Greville bowed and left the room.

"Now call the maid who attended upon Mrs. Greville," said Major Burns.

The constable who kept the door opened it and summoned the woman, who entered the room weeping.

The oath was administered.

"Your name, I believe, is Fifine——"

"Josephine, Monsieur, Josephine Laporte," interrupted the Frenchwoman.

"You were the attendant of the deceased?"

"Yes, Monsieur, I was so unfortunate."

"When did you see Mrs. Greville last, alive?"

"A little after half-past ten o'clock, Monsieur."

"Where did you see her?"

"I attended madame at that hour to her bedchamber. I assisted her to undress and put on a wrapper. Then she sat down in the easy chair—the same one Monsieur le magistrat occupies now. And she took a little Bible in her hands—the same that Monsieur le notaire holds now—to read a chapter, as was always her custom, before saying her evening prayers. Then she said—'You may retire, Fifine, and I will ring, as usual, when I require you in the morning.' I curtsied and went out, and that was the last I ever saw of madame alive."

"After retiring, did you hear any unusual sound in the night?"

"No, Monsieur."



“Where do you sleep?”

“Quite at the top of the house. In the attic over the room of Madame Hit.”

“You were among the first that discovered the murder, I believe?”

“Yes, Monsieur, I was. This morning Madame Hit told me that Madame Greville’s chamber door was open, and that Monsieur le colonel was in his dressing-room, and she directed me to take up hot water to madame. I obeyed, and discovered the room in its present state of violent disorder. And then I gave the alarm, and that is all I know of this affair tragique.”

“Do you happen to know whether there was any ill feeling between Colonel Greville and his wife?”

“No, Monsieur, I do not.”

The Frenchwoman was then permitted to retire, and Miss Mehitable Powers called up for examination.

She came in with her huge form shaking with emotion, and her big face red and swollen with weeping. Yet she strove for self-possession, and attained composure while giving in her evidence. Her testimony merely corroborated that of others, in the particulars relating to the hour at which the bride had retired to her chamber in her usual good health, and the hour at which the murder was first discovered in the morning. When this part of her testimony had been taken down, the magistrate inquired:

“Are you aware of any misunderstanding that might have existed between Colonel Greville and his deceased bride?”

Here Miss Hit’s composure was utterly overthrown. She burst into a passion of tears, and, amid choking sobs, exclaimed:

“I had rather bite my tongue off than answer that question! I had! I had! but justice must be done, if the heavens fall! Yes, gentlemen! yes! there was ill-feeling between them! at least, I mean, on *his* part and toward *her*.



For, as to *her*, poor child! she just worshipped the ground he trod on! and she always *did*, ever since I knew them both! But the more she loved him, gentlemen, the more he hated her.

At this strange statement, which no doubt Miss Hit believed to be strictly true, the younger magistrate pricked up his ears, while the elder one inquired:

“What reason have you for believing that Colonel Greville hated his young bride? Can a man be so unnatural as to hate an amiable young creature who dotes upon him, as you say this unfortunate young lady did upon her husband?”

“Why, yes, sir; for though I am a maiden lady, and should know but little of such affairs, yet I fancy that when a woman is forced upon a man against his will, he hates her, even if she is an angel, especially when he is as haughty and self-willed as our Fulke Greville.”

“And do you really mean to say that this poor young lady was actually forced upon the acceptance of Colonel Greville?” inquired the deeply shocked old magistrate.

“Ah, sir, I fear indeed that there was but little doubt of it.”

“And you believe this to be true?”

“I am very sorry to admit that I do, sir.”

“Will you be so good as to state the facts that lead you to this conclusion?”

“Yes, sir. Gentlemen!” said Miss Hit, wiping her red eyes and looking around dimly upon the magistrate and his assistants, “what I am going to tell you, I have never yet breathed to any human ear! I should not breathe a word of it now but that I am on my oath, and compelled to speak the whole truth, that the ends of justice may be satisfied. I know, then, that the poor deceased young lady was forced upon the acceptance of Colonel Greville by these circumstances. They were both the adopted children of Captain Fuljoy. It was the dearest wish of the old man’s



heart to have the two married, so that he could leave his property undivided to them both—so——”

“A moment, Miss Powers! Do not let us get on too fast. How do you know that it was the dearest wish of Captain Fuljoy that his two wards should intermarry!” inquired Major Burns.

“Because, sir, the captain has expressed such a wish to me, often and often, and because I overheard a conversation between the captain and Colonel Greville upon the subject, which I was just about to report to you when you interrupted me.”

“I beg your pardon, Miss Powers! Pray go on now.”

“Well, sir, as I remarked before, I have never breathed a word of this conversation to any human ear. No one has the least suspicion that I know any thing about it. Nor should I now, only——”

“To the point, Miss Powers, to the point, if you please,” said Major Burns, impatiently interrupting the old lady’s garrulity.

“Yes, sir; well, then, it was last Christmas, was three years ago, that the captain first broached the subject of the proposed marriage to Colonel Greville, then Mr. Fulke. It was night, and I was in the large china closet adjoining the dining-room, where Captain Fuljoy and Mr. Fulke were still lingering over their wine, for dinner had been late that afternoon.”

“Yes, well?”

“I was busy arranging the china and glass upon the shelves—for I never can trust Mandy to do it, she is so careless, she would break her weight in——”

“Never mind Mandy’s carelessness, Miss Powers; pray keep to the point.”

“Well, then, I was still busy, when the captain began to talk of what was not intended for my ears, or anybody else’s but Mr. Fulke’s. Now, I am not naturally an eaves-dropper. I scorn all such meanness, for I think it is the basest——”



“Miss Powers! Miss Powers! you are not here to defend yourself against any such charge! Therefore, *will* you be good enough to keep to the point?” exclaimed the irascible little Irishman.

“I *am* keeping to the point, if you please, sir; but I am not going to let any one believe that I remained there listening to conversation that was not intended for my ears, if I could help it. So I was about to say, that I could not prevent myself from hearing what followed, because the china closet had but one outlet, and that was through the dining-room, and as I did not like to break in upon the gentlemen over their wine, I was forced to remain where I was, and hear every thing.”

“What did you hear?”

“What I never repeated before, and would not repeat now, if I were not upon my oath to speak the whole truth.”

“Ugh! ugh! ugh!” groaned Major Burns, wiping his red face in an excited manner—“shall we *ever* get to the gist of this woman’s evidence! *What* was it you heard? *Will* you tell us or not?”

Miss Hit for a moment looked as if she would *not*; for anger begets anger. And she was very much offended at the major’s impatient interruptions. However, she thought better of it, and replied:

“I heard the captain propose to Mr. Fulke that he—Mr. Fulke—should marry little Daney. You remember, major, that the late Mrs. Greville was called Daney?”

“Yes, yes! Do go on!”

“At first Mr. Fulke laughed at the proposal, as if it had been a mere jest of the old man’s. But when the captain seriously pressed it upon him, he resented it as an affront. But the captain persevered telling him that, as he had won Daney’s affection, he was bound in honor to marry her. But Mr. Fulke did not seem to see that, and affirmed that he had never sought to win her affections, and that if he had done so it was not his fault, and that he was not to be



held responsible for the consequences; or words to that effect. The captain did not yield a point; he pleaded little Daney's cause with more warmth than delicacy, perhaps. And the more earnest the captain became, the firmer grew Mr. Fulke. He seemed to harden into rock, and he told his uncle plainly, that nothing on earth would ever induce him to marry Daney—that her social position was beneath him, and her personal appearance was disagreeable to him; or, as I said before, words to the very same effect. Then the captain, mistaken old man, tried to bribe him, promising to adopt Daney legally, and give her his own name, and leave her half his fortune, and Mr. Fulke the other half if he would marry her; but Mr. Fulke only more emphatically reiterated what he had said before, that nothing on earth would ever induce him to marry Daney, for that *he could not tolerate her as a wife*. Then the captain grew very angry, threatened to disinherit him, and ordered him out of the house. While the captain was stamping up and down the floor, and the young man was standing with his back toward me, saying something by way of leave-taking to his excited uncle, I seized the opportunity to slip unobserved from the china closet. I was still lingering in the hall, arranging its chairs, when a few minutes after the young man came out. He did not see me, but as he passed he smiled and muttered to himself words that I never have forgotten and never shall forget to the last day of my life."

"What were those words?"

"*'If I were ever weak enough to marry that girl for fortune, I should certainly be wicked enough to murder her for freedom!'*"

"Gracious heavens!" ejaculated the terribly startled Major Burns.

"Yes, sir! those were the words. Mr. Fulke left the house the same night. You may judge how those words came back to my mind, when, three weeks ago, I heard the



marriage was to come off. You may judge how they have haunted me since the events of last night. Sir, it half kills me to say it, but I have no more doubt that Fulke Greville has made away with his wife, than I have of my own existence."

"Miss Powers, we do not wish to hear any opinions of yours. Witnesses should deal only in facts. You may retire."

When Miss Hit left the room, Mr. Erlingford turned to Major Burns, and said :

"I think, sir, the evidence given by the last witness calls for the issue of a warrant for the arrest of Colonel Fulke Greville."

"I think so too! I think so too!" sadly assented the major, and turning to his clerk, he added, "Make one out immediately, Mix."

"It is already made, sir," said the clerk, handing up the document for signature.

"So prompt! There, then, serve it immediately, Hudson," said the major, affixing his name to the document, and handing it to the constable, who instantly left the chamber.

Colonel Greville was seated in the adjoining room, overwhelmed with grief, yet goaded nearly to phrensy by the unavoidable delay that held him a fixture in that place, while he longed to rush away and seek some clue to the fate of his murdered wife or her assassins.

"You are wanted, if you please, sir," said officer Hudson, laying his hand upon the colonel's shoulder and exhibiting the warrant.

The colonel looked up from the bewilderment of his great sorrow, without comprehending a word that was said to him. And the constable had to repeat his words and call his attention to the warrant, before he fairly understood their purport.

And then, but for the depth of anguish he suffered, he must have smiled at what seemed to him the absurdity of the arrest.



"A pair of Dogberries! I suppose they feel obliged to arrest *some* one, and they think that I will do as well as another," he muttered to himself, as he arose and followed the constable to the presence of the magistrate.

Major Burns was in the act of signing a search-warrant, authorizing officer Hudson, to examine the apartments and effects of Colonel Fulke Greville. He put this paper into the hands of Hudson with orders to proceed upon it immediately. And as that officer started upon his mission, the magistrate turned to the colonel and said:

"Colonel Greville, I am extremely grieved by the painful duty forced upon me, but the sad truth is, that the general circumstances attending this painful affair, and the particular charge lodged against you by Miss Powers, left me no option but to issue the warrant upon which you are brought before us. I repeat I am extremely grieved it should be so."

"Sir, the fatal event of which you have spoken has so filled my soul with sorrow, that I have no room left for any other emotion, not even for that of regret for my own arrest upon so mad a charge."

"I think, Colonel Greville, that when you shall have heard the evidence of Miss Powers, upon which this warrant was more immediately issued, you will scarcely continue to regard the charge as an unreasonable one. Let Miss M<sup>rs</sup> Hit be called."

Now Colonel Greville's countenance did really exhibit some interest and curiosity. He was certainly surprised to hear that Miss Hit had any evidence to give that could in any way implicate him. And he was curious to know what that evidence could be.

Miss Hit came in as before, shaking with excess of feeling, her head hanging helplessly back and her eyes askance with anguish, as if appealing to all present against the insupportable weight of her present position and duty.

"I cannot help it, Fulke Greville—I cannot help it. I had rather died than stand here, knowing what I know, to give



evidence against you ; but it is my duty, that the ends of justice may be answered," she sobbed.

"Address yourself to the magistrates, Miss Powers, not to the accused," said Major Burns, gravely.

Miss Hit made a grimace at him by way of reply, and then proceeded to give in her evidence, which, as it differed in no respect from that offered in her first examination, need not be repeated here. When it was finished, the elder magistrate inquired :

"Would you like to cross-examine this witness, Colonel Greville?"

"Certainly not—her statements are all correct. I admit the facts, but——"

"Colonel Greville, a gentleman of your culture and experience should know better than to make dangerous admissions. Even justice does not demand them. Quite the contrary," said Major Burns.

"I make no admissions that could possibly criminate me, since I am not criminal. I was about to say that I admit the *facts* of her statement, but deny the *inferences* she has drawn from them. It is true that, three years ago, when Daney was but a sickly child and I a petulant youth, I *did* reject her hand when it was offered me by our mutual guardian. True, also, that I used the words imputed to me, and said that—'if I could be weak enough to marry that girl for fortune, I could be wicked enough to murder her for freedom.' The words were strong ; *but I spoke of the events as equal impossibilities*. I never have been weak enough for the first act, and never could be wicked enough for the second. After a three years' absence, a few weeks since I met Daney again, under another name. The sickly child had developed into a most beautiful woman ; and I admired and loved her. I married her from the purest and most disinterested motives. I did not even know until after the ceremony was performed, that our guardian had executed a deed, reserving for himself only a life-interest



in his estates, and settling them equally upon myself and my wife, or *wholly* upon the survivor, should either of us survive the other."

" 'Settling the whole upon the survivor, should either survive the other,' " repeated Mr. Erlingford, ominously shaking his head.

"I have warned you, Colonel Greville, against making these imprudent revelations. The law no more requires a man to criminate himself, than it requires him to hang himself. Both are to be considered suicidal," said the elder magistrate.

But before Colonel Greville could reply to this remark, a bustle was heard in the next room, the connecting door was thrown open, and officer Hudson appeared, followed by an eager crowd, and bearing in his hands a gentleman's dress coat, upon which all eyes were fixed in consternation.

"What have you got there, Hudson?" inquired the elder magistrate.

"Something, your worship, as I think will throw some light on to this here dark subject. I found this coat hanging up in the wardrobe of the colonel's dressing-room. You see the cuffs are thickly spotted with blood, and so are the openings of the pockets, as if bloody hands had been thrust into them. The colonel's servants may be able to swear to the coat," replied Hudson.

"Bring it here; let us examine it; and go and call Colonel Greville's valet," said Major Burns.

The constable laid the coat upon the table before the magistrates, and then went to fetch the new witness, while every one else in the room drew near and bent forward to gaze upon the bloody token. But among all the bending faces none seemed so full of horror and amazement as that of Fulke Greville. Like the Gorgon's head, the sight seemed to turn him into stone.

Before any one found a tongue, Hudson reappeared, conducting Corporal Knox, the body-servant of Colonel Greville.



Room was made for him; the oath was administered, and his evidence taken. It was very brief, but very conclusive.

"What is your name?" asked the clerk.

"James Knox, your worship."

"Are you the servant of Colonel Greville?"

"I am, sir."

"Do you know this coat?"

"Yes, sir; it is one of my master's dress coats. He wore it last evening."

"Did he lay it off, upon retiring to his room?"

"No, your worship; as soon as I had lighted my master to his dressing-room, he took the taper from my hand and bade me leave him, as he should not need my services any more that night. I went out, and he locked the door after me."

"When you answered his bell and entered his room this morning, did you see this coat?"

"No, your worship; my master told me to get out another more suitable for morning wear. And so I neither saw, nor even thought of the missing coat."

This was the gist of Knox's evidence.

Some other unimportant questions were asked, but they elicited no further information.

"Do you wish to put any question to this witness, Colonel Greville?" coldly inquired Mr. Erlingford.

"I do not; I say, as I said in regard to the evidence given by Miss Powers—I *admit the facts, but deny the inferences.*"

For all comment, Major Burns pointed significantly to the blood-stained cuffs of the coat before him.

"On my truth and honor—as the Lord is my judge—and as I hope for salvation—I know not how that blood came upon that coat! I know it was perfectly fresh and spotlessly clean when I threw it off last night, just the instant before I sank into the arm-chair, where I fell asleep," said the colonel, solemnly.



The two magistrates consulted together for a few minutes, and then Major Burns turned and addressed himself to the accused, saying :

“Colonel Greville, a most painful duty lies before me ; and I have no alternative but to perform it. The testimony of Miss Powers as to the conversation that occurred between yourself and uncle some years ago, together with the fatal words you used in reference to your late unhappy wife ; the fact that you alone of all the world had access last night to that poor young lady’s chamber ; and the circumstance of the blood found upon your coat-sleeves—all combine to form so great a weight of evidence against you, as leaves me no choice of courses whatever. It is my solemn duty to send your case to trial before a higher tribunal, where, I hope, as often happens, these dark circumstances may be cleared away from your fame. Mix, make out the mittimus.”

“Mr. Magistrate,” said Fulke, gravely, “since the death of my beloved wife, existence has lost for me all its worth and sweetness ! Even liberty was valuable to me, only as affording opportunity for tracing out her fate. I will, therefore, only ask of your kindness that you will send off a messenger to bring Captain Fuljoy home, that he may act for me in this search.”

And so saying, Fulke Greville bowed to the magistrates, and sat down.

Major Burns promised to comply with this request. The warrant of committal was signed and delivered to Hudson.

And the same morning Fulke Greville was conveyed to the county prison, some twenty miles away on the main land.



## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE BRIDAL CHAMBER.

And if thou tellest the heavy story right—  
Upon my soul the hearers will shed tears;  
Yea, even my foes will drop fast-falling tears,  
And say—"Alas! it was a piteous deed!"—*Shakespeare.*

WE must return to Astrea, and take up her history from the moment at which, attended by her French maid, she entered her bridal chamber. She laid off her elegant evening dress, and threw on a graceful robe-de-chambre of white India muslin, seated herself in the easy chair and took the little Bible from the toilet table to read a chapter, as was her invariable custom before offering up her evening prayers.

"Will madame require any thing more?" asked Fifine, as she arranged the foot-stool under her mistress's feet.

"Nothing; you may retire; I will ring when I want you in the morning," answered Astrea.

"Good-night, madame," said the girl, curtsying.

"Good-night," kindly, replied the lady.

The Frenchwoman retired, and the bride was left alone.

Why did Astrea replace the unopened Bible upon the dressing table, rest her elbow upon the arm of her chair, and bow her beautiful head upon the palm of her hand, while sigh after sigh broke from her bosom.

She had every means and appliance of enjoyment at her command. She was blessed with youth, health, and wealth; with beauty, genius and goodness; she had realized the one blissful dream of her girlhood's life; she loved and was beloved; she was a happy wife.

Why, then, when left alone for a few moments, did profound sighs burst from her bosom as though it were overcharged with woe?"

"Who can tell? For why does the young bird, secure



in its little nest, yet shudder even at the passing shadow of the hawk's wing? A deep gloom, like the shade cast by the pinions of a descending demon, settled heavily upon the young bride's soul. In vain she tried to cast it off. In vain she called up all the dark scenes of her past life to compare them with the brightness of the present, and to assure herself how great a cause she now had for gratitude and joy. In vain! for the dark shadow would not depart.

At length, however, with a bound of relief from this weird nightmare, she heard Colonel Greville ascend the stairs, enter his dressing-room, and in a cordial, cheery tone of voice, dismiss his servant to rest. Now she thought that in a few moments she would no longer be alone; for her lover-husband would rejoin her. She breathed freely and with a smile at her recent childish weakness, she once more took up the Bible, opened it and began to read that chapter in Ephesians which the apostle fills with advice and instructions to husbands and wives. But she read with a divided attention—frequently lifting her eyes from the book and listening for those expected footsteps, that seemed so slow in coming. Useless vigilance! all was profoundly still in Colonel Greville's apartments.

But she heard the sound of painful breathing near her door. It was Miss Hit's panting and blowing, as with her attendant nymphs, Mandy and Sephy, she stole in reverential silence past the bridal apartments and went up into the third story.

With a gesture of petulant impatience, Astrea glanced at the ormolu clock upon the mantelpiece. It was on the stroke of midnight. Then with a sigh she resumed her reading of the scriptures, and read on until she had finished her chapter. Finally she laid the book aside and listened.

But as yet all continued profoundly silent in Colonel Greville's apartments. What was the meaning of this si-



lence? Her every sense was strained to its utmost tension of vigilance. She listened until her ear became so acute, that she heard the distant sounds of the kitchen servants, retiring to rest in remote parts of the house. At length these also ceased, and not a motion disturbed the deep silence of the night. Again she glanced at the clock; it was on the stroke of one; and her lamp was burning dimly as though presently it must expire. The shadow that had fallen upon her grew blacker and heavier until to her profound depression of spirits was added an excessive nervous irritability, a strange terror of being left alone, and a wild dread of impending ruin! She would willingly have retired to bed, but some awful spell seemed to rest upon her, to hold her fast to her seat, to deprive her of the power to move and the courage to look! Yes, in this strange, unexplainable panic of the nerves, she dreaded even to glance over her own shoulders!

And well she might!

What dark form is that lurking among the shadows of her bed curtains? It is clothed in female apparel, yet seems much too tall to be a woman! Its face is concealed in a black mask, and its head wrapped in a black handkerchief. Its long, black gown descends to its feet, which are cased in thick, soft slippers incapable of sound. In its right hand it clasps what seems a dark lump of some yielding substance. With its left hand it holds by the hangings of the bed and guides itself along, as it glides stealthily toward the recumbent figure of the bride in the easy chair. It glides nearer and nearer—it has passed the foot of the bed—it is crossing the room—it steals closer and closer—it stands at the back of the chair—this appalling spectre!

Feeling rather than hearing or seeing the atrocious presence, Astrea started up with a smothered cry, but in an instant a strong hand was clapped upon her mouth, and a large sponge saturated with chloroform was pressed to her nostrils, until her feeble, silent struggles subsided, and she



sunk into her seat overpowered, insensible, and for the time being, dead. Then her head was laid carefully over the low top of the chair, and the sponge, filled again with chloroform, was placed over her mouth and nose to retain her in that state of temporary death, and a large white sheet was thrown over the whole figure to confine the vapors of the deadly drug, while the dark minister of doom went about other nefarious work. It glided noiselessly to the door connecting the chamber with the dressing-room, and silently bolted it. Then as stealthily passed to the door leading out into the hall, and turned the key. Having thus secured the room against all chance of intrusion from any one in the house, the apparition passed to the French window leading out upon the upper porch, and raised its shrouded arm.

And at that signal, in an instant, the room was silently filled with a crowd of dark forms, all clothed with long black gowns, and all wearing black masks, after the manner of the first one. There was one among the dusky group, however, that differed from the others—this was Fifine, the French maid of Astrea. The group gathered around the chair of the insensible victim, where they stood and spoke in low wispers.

“Is all quite safe?” inquired one who seemed to be the leader of the band.

“All. Outside of this room, not a mouse stirs,” answered the tall figure who had signalled in the others.

“And my brother, the happy bridegroom?”

“He is stone dead for eight hours, or else there is no virtue in the black drop.”

“Has *she* taken it?”

“No, Monsieur, she refused the wine in which it was infused.”

“It could not be that she suspected it?”

“No, Monsieur, that could not be, else would she not have warned her husband? No, Monsieur, Madame did not suspect the wine. She declined it because she preferred lemonade.”



"Why did you not infuse the drugs in that?"

"Monsieur knows that the black drop would deeply tinge and flavor so delicate a liquid. Old port wine is the only medium in which the color and the flavor of the black drop can be effectually hidden. And Madame Greville refused the strong old port wine."

"How then have you produced this deep sleep?" inquired the leader, pointing to the death-like form of the bride, covered as it still was with the white sheet.

"It is not a sleep, Monsieur. It is better than that. I will explain. Madame having refused to touch the wine, all seemed lost but for the quick wit of our Fifine. She proposed the use of chloroform. Ah, Monsieur! chloroform is a great agent of mercy, not only in the hands of the surgeons, but in our hands as well! When, for instance, the subjects of *our* operations are likely to be noisy or troublesome, instead of being obliged to silence them by cutting their throats, as in former barbarous times, we can send them off in a swoon as sweet as the sleep of infancy!"

"And so this is the swoon of chloroform?" inquired the leader, lifting the sheet, and holding the light to examine the face of the victim, now cold, white, and still as though the soul had fled.

"*Par exemple!* Mademoiselle proposed its use if I thought I possessed the courage and address to attempt its administration with success. *If!* Well, Monsieur, I arrayed myself in the habit and mask of our order, took the bottle and the sponge, and seizing a favorable opportunity, slipped unobserved into the sacred precincts of this temple of Hymen, and concealed myself in the bed curtains. I waited until I felt sure that the whole house was plunged in sleep, and Monsieur le Colonel, in particular, in the heaviest hour of his insensibility, before I ventured upon my experiment! Then it was easy to creep up behind my subject, clap my hand over her mouth, and hold the sponge over her nose until she dropped into this swoon—it did not take twenty seconds to effect it!"



"Victorine, you should be the Grand Mistress of our Order!" exclaimed the man she had called Monsieur.

"I rule the Grand Master, Monsieur! it is enough for my ambition!"

"But tell me, truly, did no one suspect your identity during the ten days that you have been in the service of this family?"

"No one, Monsieur, not even Mademoiselle Fifine, who did me the honor to approve my mustaches, and immediately began to practice her fascinations upon me. She was rather disappointed to-night when I was forced to reveal myself to her!"

This piece of information was received with a low laugh and murmur of applause from the dusky group.

"Your peculiar talent, no less than your courage and fidelity, make you invaluable to your order, Victorine! The first mentioned, is indeed amazing! The ease with which you become in turn the wandering Italian minstrel, the old Irish crone, the gay young English officer, the French cook, or any thing else our interests require you to be, is almost incredible!"

"Truly? But you forget, Monsieur, that this is my trade! I was an indifferent *comedienne* before I became a novice of this order. But we are losing time, Monsieur. And though we may be perfectly safe from interruption, yet there is so much to be done that we had better hurry. But first let us examine the condition of our beauty here! It will not do for *her* to recover in the midst of our proceedings!"

With these words the speaker untied and laid aside her own mask, revealing the beautiful, dark, gipsy face of a woman, not more than thirty years of age. Then she lifted the sheet from the face of her victim, and bent to examine it, saying:

"The chloroform has all been inhaled, or evaporated. The sponge is quite dry. Yet her face is death-like, her respi-



ration imperceptible, and her pulse quite sunken. She is in as deep a swoon as any woman may be in and live! Yet it is best to make 'assurance doubly sure.' Fifiue! take the bottle and the sponge and stand beside her. Watch her attentively. And upon the slightest indication of returning consciousness, clap the chloroform to her nose again. I have other work to do!"

The French waiting-maid obeyed, took the bottle and the sponge, and placed herself before the poor bride, from whose ghastly features she never once removed her glittering, snake-like eyes, until all the other proposed deviltries were enacted in the room.

"Stand out of my way, all of you! I have something to do here which requires space!" commanded the woman called Victorine.

She was immediately obeyed by the others, who all withdrew to the walls.

"Now then, Monsieur! You are something of a surgeon! breathe this vein!" she continued, stripping up the sleeve and baring her left arm as she walked up and stood before the person addressed.

"What now, Victorine?"

"Open this vein!"

"For what purpose?"

"Stupid! do you not understand that this, our deed of darkness, must not seem to be an abduction, lest we should have the hue and cry after us! That it must, on the contrary, seem a murder, and *his* crime! That thus two most important points will be gained! We shall throw the avengers off the true scent, and we shall secure *his* apprehension and detention for some time, even if we do not get rid of him forever!"

"Admirable! Victorine! you are the master-spirit of this enterprise!"

"I shall prove that presently by deeds, not words! Breathe this vein!"



And again she offered her bare arm to the lancet. The vein was opened, and the rich, thick, crimson stream of life flowed freely. She extended her arm so as to let the blood drop fast as she moved from place to place through the chamber, noiselessly overturning chairs and rending draperies, and leaving upon every thing she touched the commonly accepted sign of guilt! No one could have looked upon the room without feeling convinced that some awful struggle, between victim and assassin, for life or death, had gone on within its walls! When she had completed her task, she turned toward Dunbar, and laughed the low, fearful laugh of successful crime and triumphant guilt, saying:

“A woman wide awake and sitting in her chair, would not suffer herself to be murdered without making some resistance! Behold, therefore, the marks of a desperate conflict! It would be rich, could we be present to see how the sapient law-officers will dwell upon all these signs as conclusive proofs that a foul crime has been committed! But by whom? I will help them to *that* conclusion also!”

And saying these words she went and drew the bolt of the door of the dressing-room, and passed into it. After an absence of five minutes, she returned, smiling, and whispering:

“He sits in his chair and sleeps like the dead! His coat lay upon another chair near him. I have smeared the cuffs and the insides of the pockets, and hidden it in the wardrobe; ‘for it must seem *his* deed.’ Now bind up my arm! my blood has done its work, and if but my ruse succeeds, my veins have not been drained in vain! But bind up my arm, quickly! I tell you I feel faint, for even I cannot lose so much of my life-stream without giddiness!”

And even as the fell woman spoke, she turned ghastly white, reeled, and might have sunk to the floor, had not the man, who seemed the leader of the band, and whom she had called Monsieur, caught her in his arms, and seated her carefully upon a lounge. He bound up her wound, and



took a flask of brandy from his pocket, and placed it at her lips. She drank freely, breathed deeply, and exclaimed heartily, though in a low whisper :

“ This is indeed *eau-de-vie* ! It gives me new life ! ”

Then springing to her feet, she said :

“ We must get her to the boat as soon as possible, for the transformation cannot be made until I have her to myself for a good hour, and that can only be managed in the cabin of the ship. Brothers, be careful as you go to leave no vestige of your presence here. *Fifine*, when we have gone, look around and see that no sign of our nocturnal visit remains.”

“ I will take care of that, madame,” answered the waiting-woman.

“ Now, then, to remove our beauty ! Monsieur, will you please to lend a hand ? Or, perhaps, you will prefer the undivided honor of bearing her off ? If so, proceed—‘ none but the brave deserve the fair ! ’ ” concluded the woman.

The leader approached, and raised the light, insensible form of the victim-bride in his arms, and passed with her through the French window out upon the upper front porch, followed by the other members of the gang—who, in obedience to the directions that had been given them, looked carefully around the room in leaving it, to assure themselves that no vestige of their fatal presence remained to betray them. And thus they passed from the bridal chamber, through the front porch and down the outer stairs to the path leading through the shrubberies down to the water’s edge.

The leader carried the insensible form of Astrea in his arms. The woman Victorine walked by her side, occasionally shredding off a fragment of the victim’s muslin dress, or a lock of her golden hair, to hang upon the bushes, saying, with her horrible laugh :

“ This is to make his sapience, the magistrate, believe that her body has been dragged, struggling, through these



bushes and cast into the sea! Thus you perceive I make it a complete case of perfect sequences! Not a link in the chain of events shall be wanting. It shall appear that *Astréa De Glacie* has been murdered, and by him who is called *Fulke Greville*. And if the strong objection your democratic juries feel to convicting a gentleman does not save him, nothing else will!"

They shuddered—even those evil men—to hear her speak thus! They neither approved nor replied, but pursued their way through the shrubbery until they reached the water's edge, where a large boat lay moored and awaited them.

The body of *Astrea* was carefully placed in the stern. And then the whole party embarked. Six of them, three for each side of the boat, took oars and rowed swiftly toward a ship that lay at anchor about a mile below the island.

On reaching the vessel, they embarked, carefully carrying the body of the unfortunate *Astrea*, who now, too late, was beginning to show signs of returning consciousness.

Monsieur bore her down into the cabin and laid her in a berth, and left her in the care of *Madame Victorine*.

Then bounding up the stairs, three steps at a time, he sprang upon deck, threw off his black mask and black gown, and revealed himself as dashing a young sea-captain as ever trod the quarter-deck.

At the same moment, as at a signal, his dark companions threw off their sloughs, and appeared as reckless a set of sailors as ever worked a pirate ship or boarded a peaceful merchantman.

At the word of command from their captain, the men immediately commenced work. Some occupied themselves with getting up the anchor, while others were busy with the sails and ropes.

Meanwhile, in the cabin below a singular scene was going on. It was a small recess in the interior of the ship, lighted



by one small lamp, that hung from the ceiling and swung with the motion of the waves. It was accommodated with two berths, one on each side, and with a chest of drawers at the upper end, immediately opposite the stairs leading up on deck. On the edge of the right hand berth lay extended the body of Astrea—still dressed in the rich white India muslin wrapper, now much torn and defaced. Her beautiful face was marble; her glistening golden hair trailed in faded splendor over her shoulders and bosom; her violet eyes, under their snowy, half-closed lids, looked like orbs of lead; one arm lay listless on her bosom, the other hung lifeless over the edge of the berth.

Beside this form of death stood the woman Victorine, still clothed in the long, flowing black robe, but with her black mask laid aside, and holding in her hand the sponge, saturated with the murderous chloroform with which she had again stupefied her victim.

“There! that will do for the present,” she exclaimed, as she stood contemplating her fiendish work.

“How long shall you be?” inquired the voice of the captain, in a fierce whisper from the head of the stairs.

“An hour,” answered the woman, in the same key.

“Do not be longer, for we sail with the first tide. And mind—disguise, but do not disfigure her; it would spoil her market.”

“I will not. I will only darken her. She will make a beautiful brunette. Her eyes are of such dark blue, that, with black eyelashes, eyebrows, and hair, and dark brown skin they will also pass for black! Oh, yes, she will be equally charming as a brunette; more so, indeed, to those who think—‘It is but the embrowning of the rind that proves the richness of the fruit enclosed within,’” said the woman, with a cynical laugh. “Besides,” she added, “how could you possibly get rid of a fair woman? Who would take her unless I darkened her?”

“No one! you reason well! Perform your part as well! Change her complexion, but preserve her beauty.”



"Sacredly."

"And finish your work within the time specified."

"Yes, I will; and do you be sure to have the boat ready to take me back to the island. The gallant bridegroom, having lost his bride, must not also lose his French cook, else will the coincidence of their joint disappearance suggest that the one has murdered the other and fled, which would be a great scandal; or that they had bolted together, which would be a greater," laughed the woman.

"I will have the boat got ready in time. Victorine?"

"Monsieur!"

"Lest I should forget to remind you in the hurry of the last moment, remember that the next rendezvous is at the Balize."

"I will remember to meet you there, Monsieur. Never fear."

The captain then disappeared from the top of the stairs.

And the woman commenced her dreadful task. First she picked up the wick of the lamp to raise a stronger light. Then she took a bottle of pale brown liquid from the top of the chest of drawers, and poured some of its contents into a tumbler. Then she took a soft piece of flannel, and sitting down beside the insensible girl, began to dye her skin by dipping the cloth in the liquid and gently washing her face, that soon changed from its transparent lily fairness to that clear, light brown hue peculiar to the complexion of quadroons. Her face, neck, bosom, arms, and hands were all made to assume this color of the mixed race. When this process was complete, the woman replaced the tumbler and the bottle, and took from the same stand a large vial of some dark preparation, labeled "Eclipse," with which, by the aid of a small sponge, she proceeded to saturate the golden hair of the victim, which began rapidly to assume a raven hue. Hair, eyebrows, and even eyelashes were treated in the same manner.

And when this second process was in its turn perfected.



no one could have recognized Astrea. Her dazzlingly fair complexion was now of a clear olive. Her glistening golden hair, and her delicately penciled eyebrows and eyelashes, were now inky black. In a word, the radiant blonde had been transformed to a brilliant brunette. She had been as beautiful as a sunny day before; she was as beautiful as a starlight night now.

The artist gazed well pleased upon her work, saying:

"I wonder what she will think when she first looks at herself in a glass? Her reason will be disturbed by her lost identity! And farther, what will she think when she finds herself out at sea, with none but strange faces around her? I should not be surprised if amazement were to drive her mad!"

"Have you got through? We shall scarcely have time to put you ashore and bring back the boat, before the tide will serve!" spoke the voice of the captain down the stairs.

"I have; 'it is a feat accomplished!' Come down and gaze upon the magic work! And tell me whether she were more lovely as a blonde or a brunette?"

The captain crept softly down the stairs and stood by his accomplice, criticising her handiwork.

"She is beautiful exceedingly, even now; yet in my opinion she was far more so before you changed her complexion. But this may be a mere matter of taste. I, being swarthy as a gipsy, naturally admire blonde women. Blonde men, on the contrary, might fancy this dark beauty. Besides, as you justly hinted, it was necessary for two reasons to change her into a brunette; first, to make her unrecognizable to her friends, and secondly, to render her saleable as a quadroon. You have done the work admirably, Victorine."

"Thank you, Monsieur."

"And now to the boat."

The woman arose and followed the man to the deck. Here at the starboard gangway lay the boat, manned by six



rowers. The captain handed Victorine in, took his place by her side, and gave the order to put off. The boat left the ship and was swiftly rowed toward the island. When they reached the shore, the woman sprang lightly upon the sands, and the boat was again turned with its head toward the ship. As the boat receded from the land, the captain stood up in the stern, waving his cap in adieu, and saying:

“Remember the rendezvous on the first of June at the Balize.”

“The first of June at the Balize! I shall remember!” replied the woman, as she turned and walked rapidly through the shrubbery toward the house.

Day was just breaking as she glided up the stairs to the upper porch and passed through the French windows and re-entered the desolate chamber of Astrea.

The girl Fifine was sitting there in the morning twilight.

“Has any one stirred?” inquired Victorine, in a low voice.

“No one; except that I have heard the fat woman overhead turn in her bed and shake the house!”

“Then let us hurry to our chambers. Every moment that we remain here longer endangers our liberty and even our lives!”

And with these words, after a last careful survey of the room, and a few more artistic touches to the picture of crime, Victorine and Fifine glided noiselessly from the chamber, and stole up to their own rooms in the garret of the back building.

The girl threw herself upon her cot bedstead to try to compose her own excited nerves and gain a few hours of restoring sleep before it should be time for her to arise and perform her part in the morning's work.

But the woman, whose constitution of tempered steel seemed to defy the effects of vigilance and fatigue, threw open her dormer window to let the early light in, and then began to dress herself in the disguise through which she had entered the service of the family. First she took the



refreshment of a sponge bath. Next she folded her long, black hair compactly, and concealed it all under a luxuriant black wig. Then she attached to her upper lip and chin the black moustaches and imperial. And finally she arrayed herself in the white linen round jacket, trowsers, and apron of "Monsieur le Chef." In which character the reader already knows that she performed her part to everybody's admiration.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### ASTREA'S AWAKENING.

A gentle start convulsed the lady's frame,  
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;  
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained,  
She looked around in wonder.—*Shelley.*

THE boat was rowed rapidly back to the ship. It was broad day. The fast approaching sun had flushed with crimson the eastern horizon. The tide was on the turn. It was going out. The captain sprang upon the deck, and began to give his orders in an impatient and peremptory tone.

The anchor was raised, the sails set, and the gallant little brigantine stood out to sea. The wind was fair, and she sailed swiftly down the broadening creek and out into the open bay. In an hour or two the shores of Maryland had faded into the distance.

Meanwhile, in the cabin below, Astrea was slowly returning to consciousness. No human creature, much less a delicate young lady, would have been so long subjected to the power of chloroform and recovered easily or completely.

Thus it happened that Astrea opened her large dark eyes, and looked around her in semi-consciousness, without memory of the past, knowledge of the present, or fear of



the future. She looked up at the queer ceiling over her head, at the strange walls around her, at the odd little door at the head of the short stairs, and finally turned her eyes down upon the unknown form of the negro woman who had now taken Victorine's place at her side. Then she rubbed her eyes, as though trying to awake from some unpleasant dream, and looked around once more, while her face began to assume an expression, first of curiosity, then of perplexity, and finally of vague alarm.

"What place is this? How came I here? And—who are you?" she inquired, looking wistfully at the negro.

"Dis ship de Kite, chile. Cap'n fotch you. I'se de stewardess," replied the negress.

"The Kite? the captain? stewardess? What are you talking about?" exclaimed Astrea, opening her large eyes to their widest extent, and then hastily rising upon her elbow and throwing a wondering glance around the cabin.

"You's on de Kite, honey, as I said afore. Cap'n fotch you. I'se de stewardess, p'inted here for to 'tend to you."

"But what does it all mean? Where is the Kite going? Who is the captain? Why was I brought here? And where, oh, where is my husband, and why has he left me here alone?" exclaimed Astrea, heaping question upon question in excessive trepidation that scarcely reached the climax of terror, for memory and understanding had not as yet returned in full force.

"Lor' Gorarmighty, chile, how you does run on to be sure! Who you think gwine to 'member of all dem questions to 'ply to dem? 'Sides which you mus' know 'nuff more 'bout it dan I do! All I know, boat went ashore up de crik som'er's 'bout 'twix' midnight an' day, an' fotch *you* off—all wrap up 'n sheet in dead swoon; an' dey carry of you down here; an' me nebber see de sight ob your face 'till little while ago, when cap'n tell me come down an' ten' to you. So how I know any thing 'bout it?"

"Captain? Oh!" exclaimed the still bewildered girl, in



a flash of false light, "you mean Captain Fuljoy, my dear guardian! but still I don't understand it! Why——" Whatever Astrea was about to ask was interrupted by the negress saying:

"Cap'n Full-ob-joy? No honey, I don' know nuffin' 'tall 'bout no Cap'n Full-ob-joy. I 'fers to de cap'n of dis ship."

"Then, what *does* all this mean? And where is Colonel Greville? Why has he left me?" wildly exclaimed Astrea.

"Colonel—*who*, honey?" inquired the negress.

"Colonel Greville! Oh, why has he left me alone so long in this strange place? I must have had a fever, and been out of my mind and lost my memory, for I have no recollection at all of why I came here! Oh, you said I was insensible when they brought me in here. Ah, to be sure! that was it! I have had a long illness, and have been delirious—indeed, my head feels very queer still—and they brought me while I was in a stupor! and they are taking me a sea-voyage for my health. I have heard of such cases before. Is not that it, my good woman?" inquired Astrea, smiling.

"'Haps so chile! I don't know nuffin' 'tall 'bout it, more an' I told you."

"Why, certainly, it is so! But how strange! Do you know, all these long weeks of my illness are perfect blanks in my existence. The last thing I remember—yes, it is coming to me now—the last thing I remember was sitting in my bedchamber very late at night, waiting for my husband to come in; and feeling very ill and nervous, and being afraid to look around, and fancying I felt or saw a tall black spectre behind me, and screaming and fainting—and that is all. That must have been the commencement of my illness. It must have been sudden congestion of the brain—followed by long fever and delirium! Thank heaven I am better now! But why does Colonel Greville stay away so long? Pray go and let him know that the crisis of my fever has passed, and that I have recovered my senses, and wish to see him above all things."



"Chile, I don't know what you're a talkin' 'bout, no more'n de dead! An I s'pects *you* don't nuther! I don't know nuffin' 'tall 'bout no Colonel Grivill. Dere's no sich here—neber was."

"What? Colonel Greville not here? Nor Captain Fuljoy neither?" cried Astrea, falling back into perplexity.

"Nyther de one nor yet de oder! Neber in all my born days heard tell on 'em."

"What? Oh! surely, they never sent me, ill, and on this voyage alone? Who came with me? In whose charge was I placed?" Asked Astrea, hurriedly, anxiously.

"Lor', chile, aint I done tell you a'ready all I know 'bout it? How de cap'n fotch you here and put you in my charge? But what I 'spects 'bout it, if you want to know *dat*, is *dis*: how your marse, Colonel Grivill, if *he* was your marse, done sold you on de sly to Marse Cap'n. Dat's what I 'spects! 'Cause you see white gem'n will do dem dere dirty tricks sometimes, an' don't think nuffin' 'tall of 'em either."

"Sold? Master? Why, woman, what are you talking about? Colonel Greville is my husband!" exclaimed Astrea, ready to weep with vexation, which was, however, quite undefined, for she was as yet far—very far—from suspecting the real horrors of her position.

"He! he! he! Colonel Grivill your husband! An' now he's done sole you! Pity, too, for you're a purty gal, too, for a 'latto."

"Woman! you are crazy, or intoxicated! How dare you talk of me and my husband in that way!" exclaimed Astrea, indignantly, starting up.

In the suddenness of her action, her hair fell forward, and flowed, a long black veil, down over her bosom!

She snatched it up and gazed at it with unmitigated amazement! She pulled at it, expecting it to fall off like a wig; but when she found that these raven tresses grew upon her head—her head, that had been glorious in its wealth of golden hair—her mouth opened, and her eyes dilated with



wonder! While thus staring aghast at her changed hair, she noticed the pale brown hue of her once lily fair hands and arms. And she raised those affrighted eyes to the face of the woman, exclaiming:

"Fiend! what diabolical art is this that has been practised upon me? Where is my dear old guardian? Where is my husband? Oh, Fulke! Fulke! where are you? Oh, wake me! wake me! from this hideous dream! Fulke! Fulke! I have the nightmare!"

Throwing her arms wildly forward, she rushed from the berth; but was instantly stopped by the negro woman, who said:

"Sit down, honey; I call de captain. He tell you all about it better 'an I can."

More from giddiness and exhaustion than in the spirit of compliance, Astrea sank in the sole chair of the cabin, and again turned her eyes in wild amazement upon her own changed hair and skin.

The negro woman—she was short, fat, and very black, and wore a dark blue gown and a bright bandanna turban—waddled up the stairs in search of her master. A few minutes passed away, and then the captain came down into the cabin alone and approached her.

"So, you wish to see me, pretty one! Well, I have no very particular objection," he said, stooping down, throwing his arm around her waist, and attempting to imprint a kiss upon her lips. But at the approach of his hot breath, she suddenly shrieked, started up, and sprang to the corner of the cabin, where she stood like a young leopardess at bay, her face ghastly, her eyes dilated, her very hair bristling up with mingled amazement, horror, and defiance!

The captain did not attempt to pursue her, but sank into the chair from which she had fled, where he remained, studying her with curiosity.

"Who are you, man?" she at length broke forth; "who are you, that dare insult me thus? Who are you, I ask?"



"Your *slave*, pretty one, if you *will*; your *master*, whether you *will* or no!"

"Insolent! You are the captain of this ship, I suppose?"

"Aye—and of *you*, my dear!"

"Wretch! do not suppose that you can insult me with impunity! Where is my husband?"

"Your *husband*, girl? In the moon, perhaps! certainly not on earth! You never had a husband, my girl. Young women of your peculiar color seldom reach the dignity of marriage," said the captain, coolly crossing one leg over the other, while he took from his pocket a cigar, lighted it, and commenced smoking away.

"Dastard! how dare you speak to me in that style! But rest assured it shall not pass unpunished. Colonel Greville will hold you to a stern account for these outrages offered to his wife!" exclaimed Astrea, indignantly.

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the only comment.

"And since you are the captain of this ship, sir, I command you to tell me how I was conveyed hither? That I was brought here through some foul felony, I begin to be aware!"

"Come, come, Zora, enough of this raving!" said the captain, coolly puffing away at his cigar.

"Zora——?" slowly repeated the victim, in amazement.

"Certainly, Zora! that is your name, is it not? or have you really forgotten *that*, as well as your position in the world?"

"Zora! my name is Astrea! I am the wife of Colonel Greville, as, no doubt, you know full well!"

"My poor girl! what a pity it is that one so young and pretty as yourself should be the victim of such a monomania! Try to shake it off, Zora!"

"I tell you I am not Zora! I am Astrea de Glacie, wife of Colonel Fulke Greville!"

"Ha! ha! ha! oh, doubtless! And to-morrow you may fancy yourself the widow of General Napoleon Bonaparte!"



Try to shake off this haunting monomania. It is the remnant of your brain fever! You were only the chambermaid in the steamboat that brought Colonel and Mrs. Fulke Greville to the island where they were to spend their honeymoon. Thinking the position of chambermaid in a steamboat unworthy of so beautiful a girl as yourself, I purchased you for eight hundred dollars from your master. You took the transfer rather hard, and had a brain fever, from which you are only now recovering! In your delirium you fancied yourself Mrs. Fulke Greville, as you might have fancied yourself Mrs. Pontius Pilate, or Mrs. Julius Cæsar. But I will help you to recover your reason by bringing to your memory one significant fact. Mrs. Fulke Greville I came down the bay in the same boat with, and had ample opportunity for knowing. Mrs. Fulke Greville, then, was the fairest among fair women, with a snowy complexion, golden hair, and blue eyes! And *you* are as dark as a Spaniard, with an olive skin and jet black hair. Come, does that bring you to your reason?"

"Oh, I know! I know! some evil art has been practised to darken me! I can see that! But for what purpose I do not know! Oh, heaven! but this is maddening. I must try to preserve my reason! try to recollect with more distinctness the circumstances attending my loss of consciousness! try to bring my understanding to judge of these things! try to summon courage to bear this misfortune, until I struggle out of it, God helping me!" exclaimed Astrea, clasping her temples between her hands.

"Yes; endeavor to recover your reason, my good girl. It is the best thing that you can possibly do," said the captain, as he arose and went on deck.

When relieved of the captain's hateful presence, even amid the anguish of her heart, Astrea dropped her head upon her hand, closed her eyes, and gave her mind up to intense thought. Two things puzzled her—the manner and motive of her abduction. First, by the severest effort of



memory, she recovered some knowledge of the manner. She now recollected distinctly the events of that fatal night. The presentiment of evil that had overshadowed her mind, while sitting alone in her chamber—the dark robed figure that had advanced upon her from behind, and that she now knew to have been a reality; her own sudden start, and smothered shriek; the instantaneous application of the sponge filled with chloroform to her mouth and nostrils; her feeble resistance, that so soon yielded to the overpowering agent; and even the silvery ringing in her brain before she fell into insensibility. All this she now remembered with sufficient assurance to have justified her in giving testimony as to the facts before any court. She studied out, also, the mystery of her sudden change of complexion. She remembered that there were certain chemical agents that would dye the hair and stain the skin, and knew that it must have been through these the change was effected. So far the manner of her abduction and the means of her disguise were sufficiently clear to her. But the motive of that abduction and disguise—what was that? Simply to take her to the South and sell her as a quadroon girl? Such, from the conversation of the captain, it would appear to be! Yet she could not believe this to be the sole object. Such a motive might have influenced some poor wretch of a kidnapper, but not this man, the master of a fine brigantine. No! there was something deeper than a small mercenary motive in her abduction! Certain half-faded memories of her childhood—the old chateau, the flag-tower, the grand-père—the long, dream-like sea voyage with people among whom she could not understand nor make herself understood in language—all these revived and connected themselves strangely with the present facts of her abduction and transformation, and convinced her that some secret enemy had some powerful motive in her suppression—though of the nature of that motive she could form no conjecture. Having thus as nearly as possible ascertained her real po-



sition, her present bondage and future dangers, her next care was to study in what manner she should deal with them. Astrea was a woman of great intellect, strong will, and firm nerves. Hitherto, these endowments had never been called into action. But this strange and terrible ordeal suddenly developed them to their highest perfection. She would not become an easy victim! She would be equal to the situation! She knew that during the sea-voyage, at least, there would be no possibility of escape, except—through suicide, and that but one event could possibly justify such a desperate act. She formed her resolutions accordingly. First of all, to possess herself as soon as possible of some deadly weapon, with which she might protect herself against the advances of the smuggler captain or any of his crew. Secondly, to indulge in no vain repinings, or weak fears, but to strengthen her mind and body to meet and conquer her fate! To effect this she resolved to pray earnestly to God for aid—and to use all earthly means besides—to take her usual quantity of food and drink, and exercise and air, and sleep also, if possible. Thirdly, that as soon as the ship should reach port, no matter where, she would invoke the aid of the first man or woman that she met, by stating her case and demanding to be taken before a magistrate for its examination. Having thus ascertained her position, and formed her course of action, Astrea grew composed. To carry out the first item of her resolutions, she arose and searched the cabin, in the hope of finding some sharp instrument, if no better than a case-knife, that she could conceal about her person. She looked over the top of the bureau, and then drew out the drawers one by one. They were nearly all filled with a gentleman's wearing apparel. And Astrea looked through three or four without finding what she wanted. At length, however, her hopes were more than realized. In the fourth or fifth drawer she found a perfect bijou of a dagger, of tempered steel—small, bright, and keen. She seized it eagerly, and closed the drawers.



"Come, little friend! Come," she said, fondly placing it in her bosom, "rest near my heart, and be to me both shield and sword!"

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### ASTREA'S VOYAGE.

Write! and tell out this bloody tale;  
Record this dire eclipse,  
This day of wrath, this endless wail,  
This dread apocalypse!—*Longfellow.*

ASTREA had scarcely concealed the weapon before the door at the head of the stairs was darkened, and the form of the negro woman appeared, bearing a waiter with her breakfast.

Astrea had scarcely any appetite; yet, pursuant of her design to keep up her strength, she sat down at the little fixture-table upon which the waiter was placed, and drank a cup of coffee, and ate a roll and a slice of ham.

"You feels better now, honey, don't you?" inquired the kind-hearted colored woman, who had watched Astrea with great satisfaction.

"Much better, thank you! What is your name, that I may know what to call you?"

"Wenus, chile—dough why dey give me *dat* name in bab-tism, I'm sure I don't know! cause you see, honey as I nebber had no chillun nyther to nuss, nor yet to *wean*! Derefore, why Wenus?"

"It is Venus, I suppose, the goddess of love," said Astrea.

"Den why dat? I don't know of no goddesses, I worships one Lord. An' I nebber was in lub in my life! So why goddess of lub?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."



“Nor I nuther, honey! why couldn’t dey call me Mary Jane, or Ann Maria, or some sensible name like dat? But no! Wenus! Just like de white folks’ nonsense! Dey called my only father Pontius Pirate! him as was a tall, slim, ole colored gemman, widout eben de beginnin’ ob a *paunch*, and likewise a ’spectable member ob de Methody-Pitily Church, as was a great deal too tender-hearted to be a *pirate*! But dat just like de white people! Dey call de old plantashum *Ben Lomond*, arter some man in Scotland! Now de idee ob callin’ a dumb house an’ lan’ arter de name ob a Christian! I don’t hold wid it *myself*!”

“Do you know where this ship is going?” inquired Astrea, interrupting the discourse of the goddess.

“Hi! how I know, chile? Marse Cap’n nebber tell we colored folks nuffin. He got such na’ty, ’tinking, ’ceitful, secrety ways wid him! I can’t bide him myself, nor no sich!”

“Why do you live with him then?” inquired Astrea, who, in pursuance of her resolutions, was determined to seek all the information she could possibly acquire under the circumstances.

“Why does I lib ’long ob him? Hi, chile! how I gwine help myse’f? I ’longs to him. He bought me off’n de ole plantashum, at de sale as followed arter ole marse’s death! Poor, dear ole marse! he was more like a farder to us dan any thing else! It is enough to fetch him out’n his grabe to know what followed arter his death. De colored people an’ de ole plantashum itself all brought underneaf ob de hammer! But you see, chile, he was too lib’al. He nebber had de spunk to say ‘no’ to nobody. An’ he lib generous; an’ he kep’ de ole house full ob company; an’ he s’ported so many ob his poor ’lations; and he help’ so many as wouldn’t help demselves; an’ he ’dorsed for a rogue as meant to cheat eberybody as he dealt wid. Dat was de las’ an’ de wus. He might ob got along wid all de res’, but he went an’ ’dorsed, an’ dat was de end ob him. Mind, honey, what



I say—you'se a berry putty gal, you is—berry putty! an' your putty face may bring you good luck; an' some day you may be f'ee; an' eben hab money ob your own. Now mine what I tell you—nebber you 'dorse! not for nobody; len' de money fust; do any thing fust; for 'dorsing is de ruination ob hund'eds an hund'eds! It was de ruination ob ole marse! Consequentially, it was de ruination ob we! When he saw de crash a-comin' he jes' took to his bed an' died ob a crushed spirit, as hund'eds an' hund'eds do. Soon as de breaf was out'n his body—FLOP! down comes all de buzzards on to what he'd lef', house an' lan' an' colored folks. All went underneaf ob de hammer. Nuffin was lef' for ole mist'ess an' de two young ladies. An' now, you see, *dey* is poor 'lations, poor t'ings, libbin' 'bout 'mong dere cousins an' sich! 'Fore dey should o' come to *dat*, I'd a' worked my finger ends off; dat is, if I'd a' been lef'; but no sich good luck! Marse Cap'n was at de sale, an' bought me to wait on de ship! An' de creditors—de buzzards *I* calls 'em—got de money."

"How long was that ago?" inquired Astrea, still in pursuit of knowledge.

"Lor', chile, not many weeks. Dis I may say is my furst voyage 'long ob Marse Cap'n. Minute he bought me he put me into a gig, 'longside ob hissself, an' druv me into de city."

"What city?" here interrupted Astrea.

"Hi, honey, New Orleans! what oder city could it be? Dat's de only city in de worl', aint it? An' our ole plantashum was a little way out'n it. An' so, you see, it took Marse Cap'n only 'bout one hour to drive to de city an' den to de w'arf, an' den he put de gig into de libery stable, an' put me into a row-boat an' took me off to dis ship, as was a layin' 'siderable way off, down de ribber. An' den we set sail, an' nebber see no more lan' 'till we come up dis crik. An' den! dat all I know! An' I has my s'picions as Marse Cap'n aint all he ought for to be! But I don't let on! I



lays low an' says nuffin, 'ca'se what can a poor woman do? An' so, you see, as he is 'ceitful to eberybody, I mus' be 'ceitful to him in self-'fence. Dat de reason he trusses me for to wait on you! 'ca'se I makes 'tence to like him."

"Such deception seems to me to be a cruel alternative, but I hope that the sin—for it is a great sin—will be charged only to those who compelled it," said Astrea, gravely.

"Jes so, honey; jes so, chile; I allus says to myse'f, an' likewise to de 'cordin angel, 'set it down to de 'count of Marse Cap'n! He my marster an' 'sponsible for all my debts! dere!"

Astrea mused for a little while, and the result of her musing was the determination to make a friend of this poor negress. As an initiative step, she inquired:

"Venus, whom do you take me to be?"

"Hi, honey! how I know? But I suppose you some young gal as Marse Capt'n took a fancy for, an' bought from your marster."

"And what do you think he means to do with me?"

"Lor, chile, what de use o' axing me? How can I tell? But I 'spects how he be gwine ither to keep you for hisself, or else to sell you to some rich gemman down at New Orleans."

"Then you must think that I am a—slave!" gasped Astrea, flushing fiery red at the word.

"Sartain, honey, dough you is berry purty, an' berry purty spoken, too; else why here?"

"Then you are mistaken, Venus! I am by position a young lady. I was seized last night in my own bedroom, and brought here by a band of ruffians."

"Lors-a-messy on top ob my poor old black soul! Is it trufe you's a tellin' ob me, honey?" exclaimed the negress, in dismay.

"The truth, as the Lord of Heaven knows," replied Astrea, solemnly.

"But what was you a doin' of all de time, chile? Why'n't you holler murder an' 'larum de house?"



"They were too quick for me! One of them stole upon me from behind, and clapped a sponge full of chloroform over my mouth and nose, and made me unconscious. Then it must have been that they took me here."

"Well! if ebber I heerd tell ob sich in all my born days! Dough I knows what dat cholera-form, is, too! I took it when de dentis' took out dis yere back toof ob mine! An' I tell you jes what, it sont me so near to de gates ob hebben dat I heard de angels singin' all trough my head! I did indeed, chile! It de trufe I'm a-tellin' ob you. An' when I come back to this yeth, my toof was out an I know nuffin tall 'bout it. An' ef it had o' been my head, it would o' been the same ting!"

"It was so with me; when I succumbed to the influence of chloroform and lost myself, I was in my bedchamber. When I recovered from its effects and came to myself, I was in this cabin. And I knew no more of the transportation than you did of the extraction of your tooth."

"I bliebs you, honey! I bliebs ebery word you says!"

"Then I hope you will be my friend?"

"Yes, chile, I'll 'fend you! Dough to do dat, I shall have to be as secrety an' 'ceitful as Marse Cap'n hisself. I shall have to 'tend to hate an' 'spise you on de face ob de yeth! Den he'll let me 'tend to you!"

Astrea sighed deeply. Deception was abhorrent to her very soul, and——

"Is there no other way?" she asked.

"Hi, honey, what oder way? How we—den gwine to get along wid a 'ceitful villain, 'less we 'ceives him? If he t'ink I your frien', he make me stay away from you, an' p'int one ob de he-debbils to wait on you! 'c'ase you see I knows Marse Cap'n! I done cotch his bref!"

"And now, then, what do you suppose he intends to do with me?"

"What I said furst; honey, ither to keep you for hisse'f, or else to 'spose ob you to some rich gemman in New



Orleans! Leastways I t'ink so! else why steal you away from your friends? But you tell me more 'bout it, honey, den may be I gib better judgment."

Astrea complied with this request, and told her new-found, humble friend as much of her story as she deemed proper to make known; in effect that she was the adopted daughter of Captain William Fuljoy, of the isle, and the wife of Colonel Fulke Greville, of the army.

"An' so dey stole you away, out'n your own bedroom! Well! if ebber I heerd tell of sich a thing in all de days of my life! Tell you what, honey! you stoop down here and listen; I has my misgibbens as Marse Cap'n is no better 'an a smuggler! An' I 'tends for to run away de furst chance I gets! An' now I mus'n't linger here much longer, fear ob 'spicion," said the woman, in a low voice, as she took up the waiter and left the cabin.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### ASTREA'S ARRIVAL.

Now, how dost thou look now? O, ill-starred wench!  
Pale as thy smock! When all shall meet at compt,  
This look of thine shall hurl their souls from heaven,  
And fiends shall catch at them—*Shakespeare.*

SCARCELY any discovery in relation to the captain could have increased the ill opinion Astrea already had of him. Deep was her grief for all that she had left behind her in the past, excessive was her terror of all that she was going to meet in the future. And now, added to these, was unmitigated horror at finding herself in the power of a smuggler! But she knew that for her, in her present circumstances, to yield to the fatal power of these subduing passions would be total ruin! Again, as at a second



demand, she was forced to rally her sinking courage. And now she took what my readers will think a strange step. She was half suffocating in the close air of the cabin. She resolved to go on deck, to breathe the fresh air, and to meet bravely, not boldly, the faces of her captors. She went up and found the captain on the deck. He came forward to meet her, saying :

“Why, now this is right, my girl ! Never mope ! moping never did any one any good yet ! Besides, it would spoil your beauty. If you have left a sweetheart behind, we will find you quite as good a one where we are going.”

Astrea passed him without making any answer, and advanced to the starboard side of the ship, and remained looking over the bulwarks.

“What ? sulking ? Why that is almost as bad as moping !” said the captain, laughing.

She did not answer, nor even seem to hear.

“Oh, very well ! all right,” laughed the man, walking away in another direction.

Astrea breathed more freely. She had dreaded lest he should follow her. But, in fact, from this time to the end of the voyage, he never more molested her with offensive attentions. His one impudent attempt to kiss her in the cabin was his first and last sin of that sort. Astrea, with all her beauty, was evidently not to his taste. He was as dark as a gipsy by nature ; Astrea was rendered so by art ; they were personally too much alike for him to be strongly attracted by her. This circumstance perhaps it was that saved her.

Astrea went on deck every day ; but her manner while there repelled the slightest advances from any of the wild crew, ignoring even those little civilities, such as placing a seat, or raising an awning, that some of the sailors respectfully offered her.

She talked with no one but Venus, and only with her when they were alone together in the cabin. Venus slept



each night on a narrow mattress laid down on the floor beside Astrea's berth. No one else ever came into the cabin.

Often at night, when all was still, Astrea would enter into conversation with her humble friend, and try to forget for awhile her own sorrows and terrors in sympathizing with the griefs and fears of poor Venus. Strangely enough, none of this poor negress's troubles were selfish. She had left behind her neither parent, husband, nor child. All her regrets were therefore given to "de ole misses an' de chil-lum," left destitute by the death of her master and the rapacity of his creditors. And all fears were that she should be drawn into sin through association with the smuggler captain and his crew. For the rest, her deepest sympathies were with Astrea, into whose bosom she tried to infuse hope and courage.

"'Sider, chile," she said one night, as she lay on the mattress beside her wakeful companion, "jes you 'sider; a young lady can't be hauled off like a fractious nigger an' no fuss made about'n it. Your frien's an' 'lations soon be on to your track an' fetch you back."

"Ah! my friends! Ah! my dear husband! Ah! my good guardian! How great their sorrow must be for their poor Astrea! And oh! even if they ever find me, they will never know me in this dreadful disguise!"

"Nebber you misdoubt, honey! Dey sure to know you. Dey know your beautiful eyes an' your sweet, thrushy voice! An' as to your brown 'plexion, honey, that will wash out arter a time! You'll see!"

"Ah no! I fear not, for it seems to me that soap and water actually sets the color. It is deeper than at first! Ah! it was a fiendish act."

"'Pletely deblish! Ef dey'd dyed you good, honest, vartuous black, like me, now, 'twouldn't a been so bad! But to gib you that ere undecent, mixed blood color! Oh!"

Perhaps Astrea did not consider that an aggravation of the offence, for she made no comment.



"Have you any idea yet where we are bound, and how far we are from port, or when we shall arrive?" she inquired.

"Yes, chile; Cap'n don't make no secret of it now! I hear the debbils up on deck talkin' about it. It is back to New Orleans we's goin'! Dough why goin' back there arter goin' nowhere but up that little crik passes of *my* sensoriams to tell! Seems like de whole v'yge was made purpose to bring you away! 'Case dis is sartan. F'om de time we lef' New Orleans to de time we drap anchor in dat crik, we nebber stopt. An' den soon as you fotch on board—whew! up anchor an' away back to where we come from! Tell you what, it look mighty rum!"

"It does, indeed, look as though my unhappy self had been the sole object of the voyage."

"Um! may depen' dere's more in it dan we can see!"

"There is! well, I suppose my fate will be decided at New Orleans! Do you know when they expect to reach that city?"

"'Bout the day after to-morrow, if de win' keep fair, leastways so de sailors say! An' now, honey, look here; it done struck eight bells! dat mean midnight dis time; so take my 'vice an' go to sleep."

As this counsel was delivered in a very drowsy tone—showing that neither grief, fear, nor pity could longer keep awake this woman of a sleepy-headed race, Astrea bade her good-night, and addressed her own thoughts to prayer.

The wind continued fair, and on the evening of the third day from this, the Kite entered the Mississippi, and dropped anchor below the city of New Orleans.

And Astrea was locked fast in her cabin.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

WELBY DUNBAR.

"His tall and well-proportioned form  
The sculptor's art might grace,  
And his heart's glow, sincere and warm,  
Is beaming o'er his face.

An arch and animated smile  
His lips will oft divide,  
But never doth a word of guile  
From their frank portals glide."

WHEN Fulke Greville was consigned to his cell in the prison of Lemingham, his first care was to ask for writing materials to address a letter to his uncle. He paused long in thought before commencing this letter. He remembered that the kind friend to whom he was about to send it was now quite aged, was tenderly attached to Astrea and to himself, and would be shocked nearly into the grave by the sudden news of her death and his arrest. That such a shock would leave him in no condition to travel. In consequence of these reflections, Fulke resolved to write, dating his letter from Fuljoy's Island, as if nothing was amiss, and entreat his uncle to come down immediately. This was done in the fewest possible lines, and a messenger paid to ride in haste to Cornport and post the letter there, as at the usual post-office of the family. At the same time he addressed a note to Major Burns, entreating him to look out for the next arrival of the "Busy Bee," and meet Captain Fuljoy, and break to him as gently as possible the dreadful events of that fatal night upon the island.

It was the morning of the second day after the despatch of this letter, that Captain Fuljoy was sitting at an early breakfast in his private parlor, at "Brown's," feeling very lonesome and depressed for the want of his pretty Daney and his brave Fulke, and blasting (he was going to say)



“the new-fangled tom-foolery” that compelled a bride and bridegroom to run away from all their friends for a month or so after marriage, when the waiter entered with a letter on a silver tray.

The captain seized it with avidity, broke the seal, and devoured its contents almost at a glance. Then he burst out into a good, jolly fit of loud laughter, rubbing his hands in the excess of his delight, and exclaiming—

“The young monkeys! the spoiled children! can’t be quiet even for a week! But it is little Daney! I know it is little Daney! Can’t be happy away from ‘Grandpa,’ husband or no husband! but must send and order him to come down immediately! Just like my delightful, affectionate, peremptory little Daney! What the devil (I was going to say) are you grinning at, you laughing hyena?” he broke off, and demanded of the poor servant, who, in pure sympathy, stood, silver tray in hand, smiling at the captain’s delight. “Go,” he continued, “directly and call a carriage for me! If I can catch the train I shall be in time for the boat—and hey! I say! tell them to make out my bill, and send some one here, instantly, to take my luggage down!”

The waiter hastened to comply, and the captain immediately began to pack his trunks—hurriedly, it is true, but not crazily as most men do when they thrust shirts, and boots, and pocket-handkerchiefs, and shoes, all in one mass into a box, and make the lid go down upon the unequal hill of clothing by hard pressure and harder swearing! The captain’s long sea-life had taught him neatness, order, and compactness. And he went about his work as deftly as a woman could. But to do it more effectually he took off his coat, and dragged the trunks from his bedroom into his parlor, where he had more space. And he was busily engaged stooping over the largest one, and trying to make a coat all right angles fold smoothly into an oblong square, and his short sleeves were rolled up, and his face was red,



and his hair blousy, when the waiter re-entered with the silver tray, and with this time, a card upon it.

"A gentleman to see you, sir!" said the waiter, as the captain looked up from his work.

"Can't see him! can't see anybody! off to catch the train in twenty minutes!" exclaimed the captain, without deigning to touch the card.

"The gentleman is coming up, sir! he is at the door!"

"Blast the gentleman (I was going to say)—what the deuce does——"

The captain's words were cut short by the entrance of the stranger—a tall, stately, dark complexioned, and very handsome young man, who stood bowing before him with grave courtesy.

The captain looked up angrily, but immediately burst out in a perfect shout of rapture, rushed toward the visitor, and seized and shook both his hands, exclaiming, amid peals of loud laughter:

"Well, you dog, here *is* a go! So you couldn't stay away from your old uncle even with a young bride to bear you company! But of course you have brought Daney with you. Where *is* my little Daney?"

"Daney?" repeated the young stranger in a respectful tone of inquiry.

"Yes, of course she came with you, and you both must have come in the same boat with your letter."

"Boat? letter?" reiterated the visitor, with a puzzled look.

"Yes, I say, you must have come by the very boat that brought the mail with your letter—since you both arrive on the same day, nay, at the same hour! A stupid piece of business, too! Can't understand it at all! But there, I won't reproach, you, you handsome puppy! Too glad to see you!" said the captain, affectionately clapping the stranger on the back. "But where the devil—(I was going to say)—have you left Daney?"



"Daney again! Really, sir, here seems to be some wide misunderstanding! Pray, have I the honor of speaking to Captain Fuljoy?" inquired the young man, earnestly.

"Why, who the foul fiend—(I was going to say)—should you be talking to? And pray, are you mad, or jesting, or what the mischief do you mean at all?"

"Captain William Fuljoy, of Fuljoy's Island?" repeated the young man, with respectful earnestness.

"Thunder and lightning, yes! Do I look as if I had changed to anybody else, since you left me four days ago?"

"There is some mistake, sir. I never had the honor of seeing you before," said the young stranger.

"Now look here, nephew, if this is a joke let me inform you that it is a very flat one; and meantime you are keeping me from my little Daney!" said the captain, beginning to imagine himself trifled with.

At this moment a waiter appeared and announced:

"The cab, sir, if you please."

"D—— the cab—(I was going to say)—they've come! The young folks I was going to see, I mean; and so I don't want the cab," said the captain.

As the servant retired, the young stranger inclined himself most respectfully toward the old man and said:

"Indeed, sir, if you take me for any other than I am, you labor under a strange delusion. Pray, may I ask you if you did me the honor to look at my card?"

"Card? card? Oh, there was a fellow sent up his card to me, but I was busy packing my trunk, to go down to the isle and see you and little Daney (for I had just got your letter, you know), and so I think I did not take time to look at the card. And, by the way, I wonder what has become of the fellow? He was on his way up-stairs, they told me."

"I was the sender of that card. It bears my name," said the young stranger, lifting the bit of pasteboard from the table, where it lay, and respectfully handing it to the captain.



The old man took it and read aloud the name,

“MR. WELBY DUNBAR.”

The captain gazed at the pasteboard and gazed at the stranger.

“And do you mean to tell me that is your name?” he asked, in a muddle of surprise, pique, and even fear.

The young stranger bowed.

The captain without more ado threw down the card, seized the left wrist of the young man and felt his pulse; muttering comments to himself as follows :

“Calm, cool, steady; no fever here; no delirium; no sign of madness whatever. Now let me see to my own——”

And with these words the captain dropped the wrist of the young visiter, and took hold of his own, muttering as before :

“Hum—good pulse! no faster than this present excitement might warrant! assuredly no indication of phrensy here!”

Then, dropping his own wrist, he pointed to a chair, and said, more curtly than politely :

“Sit you down there, sir.”

The young man smiled and obeyed.

The captain squared himself around, placed his hands upon his knees, and looked the stranger full in the face, saying :

“And now Master Fulke Greville, if you are not quiet and rational directly, I will send out for a physician to come in and decide the question which of us two is mad? It is not I, certainly. And I’ll be dashed! (I was going to say) if whichever it is shall not pay a visit to Bedlam! So now, then, are we going to leave off playing the fool? Are we going to be sensible? Are we going to tell where Doney is? Or do we prefer the Lunatic Asylum?”

“Captain Fuljoy,” said the stranger, very gravely—“that you mistake me for some other person whom I must greatly



resemble, is already but too apparent. But that I can prove myself to be Welby Dunbar, is quite certain. I have just arrived from Paris, in company with our returning minister, whom you know was recalled for certain political reasons. We travelled the whole three thousand miles together. We arrived last night. He is still in this house, and can identify me as Welby Dunbar, and indorse me, I hope, as a gentleman not unworthy of Captain Fuljoy's confidence."

While Mr. Dunbar was speaking the captain was gazing steadily at him. When he had finished speaking, the old man took hold of his own bare, fat arm, for he was still in his shirt sleeves, and pinched it sharply—pinched it black and blue, and then sadly shook his head, muttering to himself:

"To know one is dreaming and not to be able to wake! Bad, heavy sleep, this! significant of apoplexy! Here, somebody! Here, young man! I know I am talking in my sleep; but I mean what I say! Shake me smartly; shout loudly in my ears! Wake me up quickly, at all hazards."

The stranger smiled.

"How can I, sir, if I am a part of your dream? Come, Captain Fuljoy! My accidental likeness to some one you know, we will admit to be amazing; but let that suffice; and do not let your presence of mind be banished by an extraordinary resemblance between two persons! I tell you that I am prepared to prove my identity as Welby Dunbar, and also my position as a gentleman," repeated the young man.

"And neither of us is mad?"

"Assuredly not!"

"Nor dreaming?"

"On the contrary we are both of us remarkably wide awake at this moment."

"Well! All that I can say is, that it is just the most wonderful likeness that I ever did see! the very form, the very face, the very manner, and the very voice, and—yes,



by the Lord Harry—the very mole on the upper lip! Never heard of such a thing in all the days of my life! And—come to think of it, I *would* rather have you accredited by our late minister! Mr. Armfield has known me for many years. We were together a great deal when I was at Paris. And he would not lend himself to any jest at my expense, I am quite sure. Therefore, if really you are not my nephew, if you really are not playing off a stupid joke upon me, and if you really are Mr. Welby Dunbar, and fellow voyager of Mr. Armfield, I will trouble you just to go and ask him to bring you here and introduce you to me himself. And while you are gone I will just brush up my hair, and put on my coat, and make myself presentable.”

The young man laughed lightly, took up his hat, and left the room to comply with this request.

“Set fire to him! (I was going to say), he has made me lose the train, and, consequently, the boat! And now there will not be another boat for four days?” exclaimed the captain, in a tone of extreme annoyance, as he arose and proceeded to make his toilet. He had scarcely completed it, when the young stranger entered, ushering in the late minister.

Captain Fuljoy advanced cordially to meet the latter, saying:

“You are welcome home, sir! I am as happy to see you as ever I was to set foot on my native shore after a long voyage.”

“I thank you, sir! Allow me to present to you my young friend, Mr. Welby Dunbar, an English gentleman lately resident in Paris.”

The captain and the young stranger bowed and shook hands as though they had never met before. The minister apparently believed that they never had.

After a little desultory conversation, that has nothing to do with this story, the minister pleaded an engagement, bowed and withdrew, leaving Mr. Dunbar alone with the captain.



"And now, sir," said the latter, "I must apologize for the rudeness of my speech to you, when your extreme resemblance to my nephew led me to mistake you for that young gentleman, and to suppose him to be playing off a joke at my expense."

"No such apology was necessary, sir, believe me," replied the young man, with a bow.

"You mentioned to me that you had called on important business. May I ask how I can serve you?"

"Thank you, sir. Only the *most* important business could have warranted me in pressing my visit at perhaps an inconvenient moment."

"Never mind that! 'What's done is done,' and can't be undone, even when it is murder! By missing the train, I have missed the boat to Fuljoy's Isle, where my children are pining for my presence, and there will not be another for four days!"

"I am extremely sorry, sir; and yet so vitally important is my business, that I fear I still must have pressed my visit, even had I known it to be so inopportune."

"By the Lord Harry, I admire your frankness, even more than I do your modest assurance! But this business, so important that an old gentleman must lose his train and, more than that, his boat, and be detained from his home four days to hear it, even though it is nothing whatever to him—what is it?"

"I come to you, sir, on the part of the Marquise De Glacie—born Princess Astrea Caracciolo."

"Eh! Marquise—who? Princess—what? Say that over again!" said the captain, in an accession of excitement.

"I came to you, sir, on the part of Madame la Marquise De Glacie, born Princess Astrea Caracciolo!" repeated the young man, gravely.

"And now, of course, writing herself Astrea De Glacie," said the captain, with growing agitation.

"Certainly, sir; that at least is the name signed at the foot of my page of instructions."



And did Madame De Glacie ever, ever—but go on!” you had better tell me what she would have of me!” gasped the old man, breathless with emotion, and wiping his flushed and perspiring face.

“She would have only her child, Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie,” answered Mr. Dunbar.

“There! I knew it! I always knew it! or something very like it!” exclaimed the captain, falling back in his chair overcome with the contending passions of joy and grief—joy to hear that all his pre-visions as to Astrea’s rank were confirmed, grief to believe that in consequence he might lose her forever.

Then having struggled with his emotions and regained a degree of composure, he continued, in a calmer voice:

“I always felt in my heart that the little child, whose instincts led her to my door, was far other than she seemed! Those instincts were always so delicate! She did so shrink from all the coarse surroundings of her life! and tried with all her baby might to escape from them, and *did* escape from them by coming straight to me! And she prattled, too, in broken melody, half French and half English, of a chateau, and a grand-père, and a flag tower! I took her to my heart of hearts, and cherished her as though she had been my own and only child. She became the light of my eyes, the life of my heart, the angel of my home! She called herself Daney—the name given her by her rude foster parents. Accident made known to me another name. I found among the rubbish of the cottage that had been occupied by the people, the lid of what had once been a strong casket. The plate of this lid bore the name of Astrea De Glacie, and when I had my darling christened and confirmed, I gave her that name, hoping that, even if it were not her own, it might some day at least be the means of discovering her friends.”

“And so, indeed, sir, it proved; though we often wondered that the wretches who kidnapped her had not taken the precaution to change her name.”



“You see that they did; they called her Jane or Janey, and claimed her as their own offspring. And her melodious baby lips softened that into Daney, which is her pet name even to this day. But pray tell me how it happened that the name Astrea De Glacie guided her friends to me?”

“You were in Paris with the young lady last year.”

“Yes, I took her there on purpose; introduced her into society on purpose; so that her name, which I knew to be one of the noblest in France, might attract the attention of her friends, if indeed she had any. I never told her story, because so little of it as was known to me indicated an origin so humble, that to have it known would have injured her position in society. I therefore introduced her to our minister’s family, and through them to the élite of Paris, as my ward, Mademoiselle De Glacie; trusting to the name alone to reveal her existence to any friends she might possess. But alas! the De Glacies had long been forgotten in Parisian circles, or remembered only as a family attached to the Bourbon interests, out of favor at the emperor’s court, and residing therefore far away from Paris, in parts unknown. If I had possessed any surer clue than a name engraved upon the old lid of a casket, I might have gone in search of them, but having no other, I was not Quixotic enough to undertake the adventure! Therefore I am the more curious to know how it chanced, so many months after we had left Paris, that the name brought her to the notice of her family.”

“Well, sir, in this way. You remember that, though bearing an old French name, the young lady was called ‘La Belle Americaine.’ And upon account of her marvellous beauty, her portrait was solicited by all the principal photographic galleries in Paris.”

“Yes, I recollect.”

“And that it became a chief ornament and attraction at every photographic house and show window?”

“Yes, I remember; and I recollect, also, that I never



would have consented to its so general exhibition if I had not thought to myself: 'It may be one day seen by some friend of the De Glacies, and the family name and the family features, if she had any right to either, lead them to make inquiries, and find out all about her.' Else you may depend upon it I never would have allowed my darling's angel face to be exhibited to all the rabble of Paris that might choose to stop and gaze upon it—no, not even though queens and princesses *do set* the example! And now I suppose it has turned out as I half hoped, and some relative of Astrea's has seen and recognized the name, and perhaps the face, if it bears any resemblance to those of her family."

"Again you are correct in your surmises, sir! Madame la Marquise De Glacie, having returned to Paris after a protracted residence in Italy, happened to be promenading upon the Boule-varde-des-Italiens, when her gaze became rivetted by the photograph of a beautiful girl in a show window. So striking was the resemblance of this picture to Madame De Glacie, that it might have been taken for a portrait of herself in her earlier youth, but for the difference in the costume of twenty years since and the fashionable dress of to-day. She hurried into the shop, and her heart beat quickly as she inquired the name of the beautiful demoiselle whose photograph stood in the centre of the show window.

"'It is the portrait of Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie, a celebrated beauty that turned all the heads in Paris last winter. Would Madame possess herself of one? It was a bijou for the boudoir—that angel,' urged the polite shopman.

"Madame could not reply at once. Her breath was gone. She was suffocating. The name uttered was that of Madame's only child, a lovely little daughter, sole heir-ess of her large estates both in France and Italy, and who had been stolen by gipsies some thirteen years before. The



shopman, seeing Madame near fainting, gave her a chair and a glass of water. When she had recovered her voice she inquired—

“‘Who, then, was this Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie?’”

“‘She was the ward of an American gentleman. I know no more, Madame, except that she was the furore of Paris last winter. If Madame is interested, she might obtain further information from the American Minister,’ replied the salesman.

“Madame thanked the young man, purchased a dozen copies of the beautiful picture, sent the obliging shopman out to call a hackney-coach, entered it, and drove at once to the American Legation. She was so fortunate as to find Mr. Armfield within. Of him she made inquiries. And he promptly gave her all the information he possessed—namely, that Mademoiselle De Glacie was the adopted child of Captain William Fuljoy, of Fuljoy’s Island, in the State of Maryland, United States of America; but that he understood her to be of French descent; and that, certainly, Captain Fuljoy, while in Paris with his ward, had made very diligent inquiries after the family of De Glacie; but that no one appeared to have given him any accurate or satisfactory information.

“Madame then gave her reasons for making these inquiries—telling our minister of the little daughter that had been stolen from her by gipsies some thirteen years before—and of her firm belief that this young lady was that daughter.

“You may judge, sir, that Mr. Armfield listened with deep interest to this story of a mother’s woes.

“‘And you never discovered a clue to her fate until to-day?’ he inquired.

“‘Never, Monsieur. We, indeed, traced the wretches from our chateau in Normandy to the town of Calais—thence across the channel to Dover, thence to London, but in the wilderness of London we lost them! Advertise-



ments, offering large rewards, were inserted in all the English and continental papers; and the detective police both of Paris and London were heavily fed; but all in vain! no intelligence of the lost child reached us! Three years of this fruitless search completed my despair. I left the chateau in Normandy, the scene of my happy married and maternal life; the scene, also, of my sorrowful bereavement of both husband and child (for my husband, Monsieur, had died but a few weeks before my child disappeared), and I retired to my castle in Italy, there to wear out in the home of my girlhood my widowed and childless existence. Yes, Monsieur, at twenty-five—for I was even a few weeks younger than that—life had become a weary burden! the world a barren waste! Thirteen years have passed since then, and now again I find myself in Paris, brought hither by business connected with my French estates. I pass up the Boulevard-des-Italiens. I glance up at the windows of “Disderi.” My glance is instantly arrested by the portrait of my daughter; for, Monsieur, I feel assured that she is my daughter. I hurry into the shop and ask whose likeness that is, and in reply I hear the name of my daughter! So, Monsieur, there can be no doubt of the fact, can there?”

“‘I should think not, Madame,’ was the reply of our minister.

“‘And where, then, has gone Monsieur le Capitaine Fuljoy?’

“‘Back to America, Madame.’

“‘Ah! miserable mother that I am—almost a stranger in Paris, enfeebled by long suffering, and not knowing where to turn for counsel!’ moaned the lady.

“‘Take courage, Madame. Consider yourself fortunate in having discovered that your long-lost daughter is still living; that she has been carefully brought up by an excellent man; and that her beauty, genius, and goodness make her an ornament of the best society and honor to her kind guardian, and *will* make her, Madame, a sweet comfort to yourself,’ said Mr. Armfield.



“‘Yes, but mon Dieu! after thirteen years of loss to have found her and lost her again in an hour! To discover her portrait and her name! to rush here to get her address! to expect to meet her in a day! and to be told that she is three thousand miles away in some remote province of North America! Miserable mother that I am!’

“‘Nay, but Madame, this is morbid! You are happy to have discovered your daughter! happier still to have found her the angel that she is—for I can speak from certain knowledge, having known Mademoiselle De Glacie during the whole period of her residence in Paris, and to her extreme resemblance to yourself, Madame, I can bear testimony,’ said Mr. Armfield.

“‘And what, then, would you advise me to do first, Monsieur?’ she inquired, in eager haste.

“‘Engage a passage in the first steamer that sails for America, and go to Captain Fuljoy immediately on your arrival. So you will quickly embrace your daughter. You have, without doubt, Madame, some male relative who will gladly accompany you.’

“‘Ah, no Monsieur! I have no one but the younger brother of my late husband, he that is the present Marquis de Glacie. He lives at the chateau in Normandy. He inherited not only the title and estates of his elder brother, but also a large funded property that would have been Astrea’s had she not been lost and considered dead for so many years. We are bad friends, Monsieur de Glacie and myself! I could not ask him to aid me in this search,’ said the widowed marquise.

“‘Then, Madame, I still counsel you to take a passage in the first steamer that sails for New York. Take with you, as agent, some lawyer who well understands both the laws of France and America.’

“‘Ah! Monsieur, where am I to find such a one? I, who am a stranger in Paris, should not know where to look.’



“‘Madame, I can recommend you one—a young man who has studied in one of the best law schools in the world, at the University of Cambridge; who has also spent many years in America, but who has passed the last few years in Paris.’

“And here, sir, our minister kindly named your humble servant,” said Mr. Dunbar; then continuing his narrative, he added:

“Madame de Glacie took his advice, glad, in her state of mental and bodily weakness, to find some wise counselor to guide her. I was presented to her by Mr. Armfield. And being even then on the point of returning to America, the country of my adoption, I very gladly undertook to accompany her. Our minister was about the same time unexpectedly recalled home, and became our fellow passenger to New York, where, upon our arrival yesterday morning, we took the express train to Washington, believing Fuljoy’s Island to be most easily reached from this city.

“We arrived here last night, and came to this hotel. Madame de Glacie, greatly fatigued with her long journey, retired to bed at once; while I went into the bar-room, to make inquiries as to the best way of getting to Fuljoy’s Island. And then I learned, to my surprise and pleasure, that Captain Fuljoy was stopping at this house.

“Late as it was, I think I should have intruded on you, sir, but upon inquiry, I found that you had gone to the theatre. But this morning, so soon as I had learned that you had breakfasted, I ventured to present myself.”

During the narrative of Mr. Dunbar, the captain had listened with profound attention and without once interrupting him. At its close, he sighed and said:

“And so my little Daney springs from the princely house of Caracciolo on her mother’s side, and from the noble one of De Glacie on her father’s. Well, I am not so much surprised after all! No, young man, I am not! Something of this sort my heart had always prevised! though not,



perhaps, that she was of so very high rank. The chateau she vaguely remembered, poor child, was, I suppose, that one in Normandy; and the grand-père, whose visit was always honored with such parade of servants and flying of flags was doubtless——”

“The Prince Cesario Caracciolo—yes, sir.”

“And—Madame la Marquise De Glacie, the mother of my little Daney, is actually under this very roof!” said the captain, more as if speaking to himself, than as addressing an observation to his visitor.

Mr. Dunbar bowed assent, adding:

“As soon as Madame has left her chamber I will inform her of your providential presence in the house, and bring you to an interview with her; but may I inquire when we can see Mademoiselle De Glacie?”

“Mademoiselle De Glacie is——But I had better reserve that information for her mother’s first hearing, that being her right——Mademoiselle De Glacie is quite well, and is at present staying at Fuljoy’s Isle. We can see her as soon as we can travel down there.”

At this moment a servant rapped, and inquired if Mr. Dunbar was in Captain Fuljoy’s room, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, said that Madame De Glacie having risen and breakfasted, desired to see Mr. Dunbar in her parlor. The young lawyer immediately arose, and bowed to the captain, and retired.

The captain remained in deep and not altogether pleasurable thought for some fifteen or twenty minutes, at the end of which the door opened and Welby Dunbar reappeared, saying:

“I have advised Madame of your presence here. She will be glad to see you, at your earliest convenience, in her private apartments.”

“Oh, I will go now,” said the captain, rising to follow his conductor.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE MARQUISE DE GLACIE.

Oh! her beauty is fair to see,  
But still and steadfast is her e'e,  
And the soft desire of ladies' e'en  
In that mild face is never seen.  
Her symbol is the lily flower,  
Or else the white rose in a shower,  
And her voice the distant melody,  
Floating along the midnight sea;  
And she loves to rove the lonely glen  
Keeping afar from the haunts of men.—*Queen's Wake.*

THE young man bowed, and led the way up-stairs to the floor above, and to a spacious and elegantly furnished front parlor, where, reclining in a large arm-chair near a front window, sat Madame De Glacie, a fair, faded, graceful woman, dressed in deep mourning.

"Madame, I have the honor to present to you Captain William Fuljoy, of the Isle——Captain Fuljoy, Madame la Marquise De Glacie," said Mr. Dunbar, formally introducing the parties.

The honest old sailor bowed down to the toes of his boots.

The marquise arose and curtsied gravely. Their eyes met, and the lady, with an effusion of gratitude, suddenly held out her hand, exclaiming:

"Monsieur le Capitaine, we must not meet as strangers; I owe you more than life; the preserver of my dear child for so many years! how am I to repay you?"

Down went the captain's brows again to his toes in acknowledgment to this compliment.

"Be seated, Monsieur, I pray you, and tell me how I may adequately prove my gratitude for your so great goodness?" said the lady, reaching out her hand and drawing a chair close to her own.

"Madame, you owe me no such debt of gratiude. The



sweet society of my little Da——, I mean your little girl, was a great happiness to me—a great happiness that I only regret as having been enjoyed at the cost of so much pain to you!” said the captain, in a grave, tender, respectful tone, as he took the indicated seat near the lady.

“Pain! Ah! heaven only knows how intolerable were my sufferings! Daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, for so many many years, to weep her loss, to yearn for her presence, and to fear for her fate! to follow her in sick imagination through all the varied scenes of want, wo, perhaps, also, wickedness, to which her wandering life would lead her. To lie awake night after night for years and years, praying that she might be dead and safe!——Ah! think how a mother’s heart must be wrung before she can pray for the death of her child! But to judge how I have suffered, Monsieur, look upon me!”

The captain turned a reverential glance to the lady’s face for a moment, and then lowered his eyes with a lowly bend of his gray head, saying:

“It is past, Madame, and you are still young, with many years of life before you, to be brightened by the love of your good and beautiful daughter.”

“And that I still *have* that fair hope, that my child *has* been preserved to me, and that she *is* good and beautiful, I owe to you, Monsieur! Oh! how shall I repay you? I would, with my very life, if that could do you any good, my friend!” said the lady, fervently.

“Madame, I am an old man, looking for all future rewards to heaven alone. And in this case, I repeat to you, you owe me nothing! I have been more than repaid in the delight I have taken from the society of my little Da——, your little girl, I mean! And I ought, rather, to beg you to forgive me for being (unconsciously) so happy at the expense of your sorrow!”

“Monsieur, your great goodness makes all reply impossible. I will say no more, except to entreat you to speak to me of my child,” said the lady.



"You wish to know the history of my adoption of her?" inquired the captain.

"I do," answered the lady.

The old man "began at the beginning," and told the lady all the particulars of his first acquaintance with little Daney, his subsequent adoption of her, his happy companionship with her, his education of her, and so forth, up to the time of his taking her to Paris, on the speculation of finding some clue to her friends. Then the captain paused in embarrassment. He was the most modest of all bashful old bachelors; he blushed to speak to a fair woman of love, courtship, and marriage; he dreaded, especially, to inform this mother of the wedding of her long-lost, lately-found daughter; and so, in the midst of his narrative, he suddenly fell silent.

"Monsieur has something that he hesitates to say to me? Alas! does any misfortune lurk behind my coming happiness? Is it well with my child?" said the marquise, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, Madame; it is very well with her; extremely well, indeed; she is very happy; especially happy; both she and the colonel; for do they not call a newly married bride and groom, *par excellence*, 'happy?'"

"'Newly married? bride? groom?' Monsieur, do you mean to tell me that my daughter is—wedded?"

"Madame," exclaimed the distressed old man, with the blood rushing to his cheeks and the tears to his eyes—"Madame, I beg your pardon, on my knees, for marrying my little Da—I mean your accomplished daughter, to my nephew, without your consent. But just think, Madame, I knew nothing of your existence, ignorant old recluse that I was, and therefore I could not apply to you for your sanction of the nuptials. I beseech you, pardon me!"

The marquise gazed with surprise, compassion, and admiration upon the simple, sensitive, earnest old man. She generously swallowed the sobs of maternal sorrow that



arose when she found it would not be a maiden daughter she would clasp to her bosom ; and she took the captain's hand, earnestly exclaiming—

“Excellent old friend ! Do not mistake surprise for disapprobation, or still worse, for reproach ! What ! reproach *you* for the crowning act of your goodness ? You adopted, brought up, and educated my lost child, and you completed your work of god-like beneficence, by giving her in marriage to the most honorable among men ! for such Monsieur, her bridegroom must be—*being your nephew !*”

“Madame,” said the relieved and delighted captain—“he is a well-looking young dog, without any reproach to his name ; he comes of a good family ; holds the rank of a colonel in our army ; and lastly, he is devotedly attached to my little Daney ; but still, Madame, in social position, not worthy to match with the daughter of the Marquise De Glacie.”

“But pardon me, Monsieur, he *is* ; he *must* be—being your nephew ! And now speak to me of my daughter—when and where was she married ?”

“At St. John's church, in this city, five days ago.”

“And where is she now ?”

“At the isle, with her husband, spending the honeymoon.”

“And when can I see her ?”

“Madame, if any other had asked that question, I must have answered, ‘Not possibly for five days, for it will be four days before the next boat leaves Baltimore for the isle ;’ but your natural impatience has so stimulated my invention, that I have hit upon a plan by which you may see her sooner.”

“Ah ! how, Monsieur ?”

“If you feel able to undertake a long ride, we can hire a carriage and pair of horses, and travel by land to Cornport, which we can reach in two days. At Cornport we can hire a boat that will take us to the isle in two hours !”



"Ah! Monsieur, how good you are!"

"Good! who? I? Why, I am the most selfish old curmudgeon in existence! I mention this plan because I am as impatient to see my little Daney as you, Madame, are to embrace your accomplished daughter."

"You are all disinterested goodness, Monsieur, and no one shall say otherwise in my hearing without contradiction. But now, oh! let us start at once!"

"But Madame will require some hours to pack?" suggested the captain.

"Not an hour! not a moment! I have a few necessities not yet unpacked from a travelling bag; they will suffice. But, Monsieur, forgive me! I do wrong to hurry you. You will have some preparations to make for yourself," said the lady, deprecatingly.

"Nothing of the sort, Madame. I am an old salt, who could fit out for the Indian voyage in half an hour. As it is, I have my portmanteau already packed, having been upon the eve of starting for the island when the visit of your lawyer caused me to lose my train, and consequently to lose the only boat that will go for four days. And now I am very glad we thought of the land journey," said the captain, rising and standing up as if silently asking leave to withdraw.

"Then, Monsieur, I will not detain you; Mr. Dunbar will do me the favor of ordering the carriage and horses that we shall require, and I will take care to have my bonnet and shawl on by the time they will be at the door," said the marquise, with a graceful bend of her head.

"And I, Madame, will be in readiness to attend you," said the gallant old captain, bowing himself out.

Mr. Dunbar followed to execute the lady's orders.

When they were gone, the lady called to her attendant in the adjoining chamber—

"Elise! quick! get together every thing we may need for a two days' journey and a week's stay in the country! We must start in ten minutes!"



In obedience to this summons, an elderly French "bonne," in a wonderfully high-crowned muslin cap, entered the parlor, and began hastily to gather the little articles that lay scattered about the room, preparatory to packing them up.

"Oh! Elise! Elise! think of this! In two days I shall embrace my daughter and you your nursling!" exclaimed the marquise with delight.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE MOTHER'S JOY.

I feel within my soul a springing joy!  
A rapture which no language can express!  
An ecstasy, that mothers only know,  
Plays round my heart and brightens up my sorrow,  
Like gleams of sunshine in a lowering sky.—*Philips.*

MONEY does so well lubricate all the wheels and pulleys of civilized life, that by its liberal application all the arrangements for the journey were satisfactorily completed within an hour.

A handsome and commodious travelling carriage, drawn by two strong roadsters, stood before the door.

Madame De Glacie, in a black silk dress mantle and bonnet, attended by her maid, carrying a carpet bag, came down and was handed into the back seat by Captain Fuljoy. Madame Elise was placed in front of her. Captain Fuljoy and Mr. Dunbar then mounted two saddled horses that were led around for the purpose, the order was given and the carriage started, the two cavaliers riding in attendance.

It was a fine day, and the freshness of the air, the motion of the carriage, and, above all, the expectation of seeing her daughter, so exhilarated the spirits of Madame De Glacie, that she became again, for the first time in many years, the gay, witty, and fascinating Italian woman. In the innocent



hilarity of her heart, she so often summoned the captain to the carriage window, and so flattered and bewildered the honest and susceptible old sailor, that he scarcely knew whether he rode upon horseback or stood upon the quarter-deck!

And ever after one of these sallies from the fair marquise, the simple old bachelor would fall back in the rear of the carriage, furiously blushing, and saying to himself—

“Egad, I must remember that I am a married man with a wife waiting for me up in Heaven, or I’ll be dashed (I was going to say) if I do not fall over head and ears in love with my little Daney’s mother before I know where I am!”

“Little Daney’s mother!” Yes, that was the charm the lady possessed for the honest old man. He “didn’t care a bodle” for the fair, graceful, and witty marquise—but for his little Daney’s mother!

He rode on in silence, secretly invoking his Mary in Heaven to aid his constancy. And so they passed over the Anacostian bridge crossing the Potomac, and entered the old forest road leading through the heart of Prince George’s county. Late in the afternoon they reached a small, old-fashioned inn, in the depths of the forest, where they stopped to feed the horses, dine, and rest. And in the evening, as the nights were very light, they resumed their journey and travelled until midnight, when, having arrived at the little town of Chaptico, they rested until morning. At sunrise they recommenced their journey, and travelled until noon, when they again paused to recruit the energies of their horses and themselves. And thus proceeding, by short stages, through a beautiful, well-wooded, and well-watered country, they reached, at the close of the second day, the little town of Cornport. The captain conducted his party at once to the neat little tavern of the Wheat-sheafs, where he had the horses put up, and where he secured comfortable apartments for Madame De Glacie, while he himself went out to seek a boat to convey them to the



isle. In walking down the street leading to the water's edge, he met Major Burns. Throwing out both hands cordially to greet the little Irishman, he exclaimed:

"Old neighbor ahoy! where are you bound so fast? with all your sails set, and going at the rate of nine knots an hour?"

The little major, who had been hurrying along unconscious of the captain's proximity, now started, stopped short, and gasped out in dismay—

"Captain Fuljoy! You here! Good heaven!"

"Well! I'm dashed! (I was going to say) if that is not a pretty way in which to welcome an old friend! Why, Burns, you look struck with consternation! just as though I had caught you in some wickedness! What ails you, man alive?"

"Then you have not heard—," the major commenced, but he lost his voice before he could conclude the question.

"Heard *what*, confound you (I was going to say), what do you mean?"

"Oh, Fuljoy! Fuljoy! old fellow, what brought you down here to-day?" cried the major.

"Well! upon my word and honor if that is not a pretty question to ask me! What brought me down here! my legs, to be sure! or rather my horse's! But if you want to know what motive brought me down here, why that's a longer story! My brave Fulke and my pretty Daney could not live longer without me, even though they had each other's company. So what do they do but write a pretty, short, peremptory order for me to come down to them—the little despots!—there it is!" said the captain, laughing, and thrusting into the major's hand the note written by Fulke, which he had just drawn from his pocket.

Major Burns ran his eyes over it and recognized it as the one which Fulke must have written from his prison, though it dated from the isle, and contained no hint of the late tragic events. The major groaned deeply as he returned it to the happy, unconscious old man.



"Yes, you see, young tyrants! must have me down directly! couldn't live without me! Lord! Lord! how I have spoiled those children, to be sure! Well! I should have come down by the boat yesterday morning, only you see a happy accident, of which I am not yet at liberty to speak, detained me and made me lose my train! and also enlarged my family party and determined me to come down by road! But no more of that at present! Can you tell me where I can pick up a safe boat to take us up to the island to-night? For I assure you, never was bridegroom more anxious to greet his bride than I am to embrace my little Daney."

"Um-um-m-e!" groaned the major, in reply.

"What the foul fiend (I was going to say) is the matter with you?"

"Um-m-m-e! Captain, my boat is at the wharf! I will take you to the isle," said the major, in a tragic tone.

"Thank you! thank you heartily, old friend! But can you take our whole party? I have a lady, a lady's maid, and a gentleman with me! Can you take us all?"

"Um-um-um-me! yes!" groaned the major.

"Thank you again! But I say! what the mischief ails you? You look dreadfully ill?"

"I am in pain," gasped the major.

"Where?" anxiously inquired the captain.

"Here, in the region of the heart!" said Major Burns, laying his hand upon his vest.

"Oh! nothing but wind! Come in to the 'Wheatsheafs' and take a mint julep!"

"No! no! it is too deep for that; it will do no good! I will go and get the boat in readiness! Pray heaven somebody else may tell him before I see him again!" muttered the miserable little man to himself.

"Burns looks queer! I am afraid he has been drinking hard, and is just recovering from its effects," said the captain, as he took his way back to the inn.



He stopped at the bar for a moment to give orders for tea to be prepared for the lady, and while he stood there these words, passing between two men who were drinking together at the other end of the counter, reached his ears :

“ Oh, *he* did it ! there is no doubt about it in the world ! No one else could have got into her chamber ! And if he *didn't* do it himself, *what* else was he doing ? For as to that lame story of his being asleep in the arm-chair of his dressing-room—faugh ! that is an insult to our common sense ! Who the devil ever heard of a bridegroom going to sleep in his chair the very first night he brought his bride home ! Tell that to the marines if you like ! but not to an intelligent jury—at least if *I* were on it ! ”

“ No ! ” was the reply, “ for even the magistrates couldn't help laughing when that came out—laughing in the midst of all that dreadful scene ! No *sir* ! there must be some better defence than that got up, or he'll swing for it ! ”

“ Hush ! by George ! there's the captain himself ! and he has heard every word we have said ! ” exclaimed the first speaker, in a whisper, that nevertheless reached the captain's ear as distinctly as any other portion of the conversation.

He was startled and surprised, and made vaguely anxious about—he knew not what ! He felt impelled to go and ask the men what they were talking of ; but to do this he thought would be rude and unjustifiable. The conversation was evidently not intended for *his* ear, and besides, good gracious ! there were other brides and bridegrooms in this world than the young pair *his* partiality deified ! Why then should every thing that was said particularly concern Colonel and Mrs. Fulke Greville ! And the captain smiled inwardly at his own fond egotism. Again, the bridegroom here spoken of was somehow or other in fault, and so of course could not have been *his* boy ! reasoned the captain ; but reason as he would, there remained the undefined anxiety about his heart. To shake it off, he gave a par-



ticular order about tea, and went into a private parlor to wait until it should be served. He was soon joined by Madame de Glacie, who, sinking into a chair, inquired:

"Monsieur will pardon the impatience of a mother; but when then shall we proceed to the isle—the blessed isle that holds my daughter?"

"Just as soon as the boat that I have been so fortunate as to secure can be prepared, Madame. By the time we have had tea it will no doubt be ready."

At this moment a waiter entered and laid the cloth, and immediately afterward tea and coffee, with toast and muffins, and ham and venison were brought in. Mr. Dunbar joined them at the table. The meal was not quite over when a message came from Major Burns to the effect that the boat was waiting.

"Major Burns?" inquired the lady, looking up from her coffee cup.

"Yes, Madame; it is not a hired boat, but a borrowed boat—the property of my neighbor, Major Burns, who is down here on business, and kindly offers to take us to the isle. Tell Major Burns that we will join him in a few minutes," said the captain to the messenger.

And, accordingly, in something less than a quarter of an hour, the whole party walked down to the wharf, where they found the major, the boat, and four oarsmen.

"Madame De Glacie, my friend Major Burns," said the captain, introducing the parties.

"Madame De Glacie," repeated the major, as he handed the lady to a cushioned seat in the stern of the boat, "what, that is—that is—the same name as——"

"My little Daney's! Yes, Madame is a relation, a very near relation, of my little Daney," interrupted the captain, in the tone of one who wished to drop the subject.

The major bowed, and occupied himself with making his guest comfortable.

"Major Burns, my friend, Mr. Dunbar," said the captain,



presenting the young lawyer as the major looked up from his work.

“Mr.—who?” he inquired, staring aghast at the stranger.

“Dunbar, of London.”

“Well! if ever I saw such a likeness in all the days of my life!” he exclaimed, without withdrawing his gaze; then quickly recovering himself, he added: “I beg your pardon, Mr. Dunbar! but really I was taken quite aback by your very extraordinary resemblance to a young friend of mine. I am glad to make your acquaintance, sir. How do you do? Pray find a seat and make yourself comfortable. Lord bless my soul alive, the likeness is perfectly wonderful. I should not be able to tell one from the other, if I were to see them standing side by side!” concluded the major, sinking into a short reverie.

“Yes, the likeness is bewildering! It quite confused me, when I first met this gentlemen,” commented the captain, as he kindly busied himself with settling Elise near her mistress.

The oarsmen laid themselves to their oars, and the boat flew over the moonlit waters. It was, indeed, a lovely night. The sun had long set. The full harvest moon was directly overhead, pouring down a flood of diamond bright radiance upon the calm bosom of the waters. The wooded shores each side were cool and green in the dewy freshness of the summer evening. Before them up the creek lay reposing in the shadows the lovely little island.

Madame De Glacie sat in the stern of the boat, gazing abstractedly upon the beauty of the scene, and thinking, doubtlessly, of the daughter she hoped so soon to embrace. Her maid sat in respectful silence at her feet. Mr. Dunbar occupied a seat near the centre of the boat, and the major and the captain sat together in the bows.

As they sped over the waters, the captain turned to the major, and, in a low voice, inquired:

“What has occurred in this neighborhood? What is this I hear about a bride and groom?”



"Um-me-me! what bride and groom?" groaned the major, visibly shivering.

"See here, old friend, you have got an ague! You ought to have medical advice, and you ought *not* to be out in the night air!"

"No, I'm sure I oughtn't; but never mind me!"

"You take advice to-morrow, now will you?"

"Yes."

"Be sure you do it; it will not do to let these chills run on. But now tell me, what about this bride and groom?"

"What bride and groom?" inquired the major, with his teeth audibly chattering.

"Oh! I didn't hear their names; but some bridegroom has been behaving badly to his bride—doing something for which he ought to be hanged. As far as I could gather from the conversation of the men in the bar-room of the 'Wheatsheaf,' the delinquent bridegroom had gone to sleep in his arm-chair on the first night that he brought his bride home; and if he really did *that*, I think hanging a very mild punishment for such an insensible brute. Do you know any thing about it?"

"Nothing whatever," answered the major, with his teeth going like a pair of castanets.

"Oh! see here, you know, this won't do! it will turn to a congestive ague! You must take something immediately! Miss Elise, I dare say you have some brandy in your travelling bag! Will you be good enough to dispense some of that water of life to my friend here?"

The femme-de-chambre, with a "Certainment avec plaisir, Monsieur!" produced a fairy flask, which Major Burns unhesitatingly applied to his lips.

"You feel better now?" said the captain.

"Better," echoed the major.

"Ah! it was only the night air. Old coves like you and I should be careful of ourselves. And now tell me, have you seen my little Daney since her marriage?"

"I have not."



"Nor Fulke?"

"Yes, I have seen Colonel Greville."

"How long since?"

"On the day before yesterday."

"He was well?"

"Yes."

"And Daney was also well, of course?"

"I did not see her."

"Bother, man! you inquired after her, I suppose? and can tell how she was."

The major did not reply.

And the captain suddenly turned upon him, saying:

"See here, Major Burns? here is something wrong! Is my little Daney ill that you do not reply?"

"Upon my word and honor, I do not know. I never heard she was ill; and I have no reason to suppose that she is," said the major, telling a literal truth, but a spiritual falsehood.

"Humph! I am fidgety, I believe," commented the captain, settling himself to composure.

"All is well, Monsieur, I hope?" said the lady, who had overheard a part of the conversation.

"Oh, yes, Madame! except that I am an irritable old bachelor, heaven help me! And now observe, Madame! how peacefully the little green wooded isle reposes upon the calm bosom of the water, while the forest-fringed shores of the mainland seem to encircle the whole scene with an embrace! Ten minutes more and we shall reach that lovely isle, and your daughter will be in your arms! Think of the surprise and joy for her!"

Her daughter!

The captain had been betrayed into speaking out the truth. Major Burns heard and wondered, but did not venture to ask an explanation of what appeared to him to be inexplicable words.

The little boat sped onward, and soon ran up into the tiny cove, the usual landing-place at the isle.



The captain sprang upon shore lightly, as though he had been but eighteen instead of eighty—handing out the mar-quis, leaving the maid to the civilities of the young lawyer.

“I hope you will do us the pleasure of coming up to the house and spending the evening, Major Burns,” said the captain, without, however, the most distant idea that the major would accept this invitation.

“I must, I suppose,” answered the miserable little magistrate in a sepulchral tone, and to the infinite astonishment of the old sailor, who again muttered to himself:

“Something quite wrong about Burns! very wrong! can’t think what’s the matter with him! going crazy, I am afraid!”

But the moment was too interesting upon other accounts to allow the honest old man’s mind to dwell much upon the supposed caprices of his boon companion; and so, taking the arm of Madame de Glacie within his own, he respectfully conducted her toward the house.

The evening was still beautiful in its green and dewy summer freshness; the moon was still flooding woods and waters with her pure and radiant light; the island was always quiet and peaceful in the extreme, and especially so at night, but now it was more than usually so; an air of awful stillness and solemnity seemed to overhang the scene; every one felt its influence. The captain sought to break the spell, by calling out cheerfully to his companions:

“How astonished they will be to see us! How little people ever know what is about to happen to them next!”

“How little, indeed!” groaned the major.

“There you are again, you old killjoy! I’ll tell you what, Major, you are suffering under a very bad attack of indigestion! You’ve been eating soft crabs, and water-melons, and curds and whey, and deuce knows what else! and they’ve all fermented together, and filled your brain with foul vapors! But never mind! you come up to the house, and the sight of my pretty Daney and my brave Fulke will disperse them!” said the old man, heartily.



"Um-me!" moaned the major. "Captain, as soon as you reach the house, consign the lady and her companions to Miss Hit's charge, and then come away with me into the library. I wish to have a private interview with you!"

"What! before I have embraced my little Daney, or shaken the hand of Fulke?"

"Yes!"

"I'll be dashed, then (I was going to say), if I do!"

"Um-m-me!" groaned the major.

"I say it, and I stand to it, that soft crabs are bad things to take! just see how they oppress you now!" growled the captain, who, having arrived at a satisfactory theory of the major's indisposition, firmly cherished the illusion.

A few steps further brought them to the house.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE OLD MAN'S GRIEF.

He looked the very statue of despair,  
As if the lightning blast had dried him up,  
And had not left him moisture for a tear!—*Martin.*

"WHY, it is all shut up and darkened! And there is not a soul to be seen! Usually we sit out on the porch at this hour!" said the captain, impatiently springing upon the door-sill, and sharply ringing the bell.

Twice or thrice he rung it before it was answered. At length the door was opened, and Mandy appeared with a single candle, and a scared visage. The hall was all in darkness, except for that one candle.

"How do, Mandy? All well? Why are you in the dark? Where is your young master and mistress? Sitting at some back window, I suppose, gazing at the moon. Show us into the drawing-room, and let them know I am here," said the



captain, hurrying question upon question, and, without waiting for them to be answered, heaping order upon order.

But Mandy stood gazing upon him in bewilderment and great sorrow.

"Well! why the *devil* (I was going to say) don't you go?"

"Oh, Marse! oh, my poor, dear ole Marse! I go call Miss Hitable!" cried Mandy, rushing away with a perfect howl of distress.

"Now, what the *demon* (I was going to say) is the meaning of all this? Madame, let me lead you to the drawing-room. There will be lights in a moment, I suppose. We have no gas in these remote regions, or I should soon have an illumination," said the old man, as he respectfully conducted the lady into the saloon, and guided her through the darkness to a sofa.

"Seat yourself, Madame, and I will go and see if I can find any one. These lovers, you know, are mooning somewhere or other, and our sudden arrival has frightened that negro girl out of her wits. She is but a rustic," explained the captain, as he felt about among the cushions, and arranged them comfortably for his guest's repose.

"Captain, captain, for the love of heaven, come away with me somewhere. I have something to say to you privately," urged the major.

"Presently, presently, my good friend; I must see to the comfort of my visitors first."

"Captain, for heaven's sake——"

"Now don't be irritable! It is all from the effects of the soft crabs; take care you don't indulge in them again soon!"

"Oh, heaven, it is *you* who will not hear reason! It is you who will not take advice! It is you who will pull down an avalanche upon your own head, that might otherwise be broken in its descent! And before strangers, too! Heaven help you!" cried the major, in a voice of anguish.

"What the devil (I was going to say) do you mean?"



What business *can* you have with me that cannot wait until I have made my guests comfortable and embraced my little Daney?"

"I will tell you if you will come with me into the library," urged the distressed little Irishman.

"To the demon with you for a sturdy beggar (I was going to say); can't you comprehend that I *can not* leave Madame De Glacie until I have presented her daughter and son-in-law to her? Yes! that is the relationship, if you must know! You are aware that I always said that my little Daney belonged to some noble French family, and so it has turned out! There, now, that is the reason why I cannot go with you to talk politics—or whatever it is! I must wait here to present my little Daney to her mamma. And, by the way, where *is* my little Daney, and why the deuce don't she come?" said the captain, in good-humored impatience.

"Oh, heaven! she will *never* come again!" burst in desperation from the lips of the Major.

"Eh, what?" exclaimed the old man; but before he could answer another word, the door was burst open, and Mandy appeared with a red and flaring lamp, that filled the room with a murky light, followed by Miss Hit, who, rushing past every one else, ran and threw herself upon the captain, shaking with agitation, and crying out with anguish:

"Oh, captain! captain! oh, my poor, dear old friend!"

"What—what's the matter?" gasped the old man, now alarmed for the first time, and trying to stand up against the mountain of Miss Hit's weight.

"Oh, Daney! Daney!"

"Where *is* Daney? What about Daney? Is she ill?" cried the captain, growing suddenly pale in the red glare.

"Oh, she is dead! dead! oh, murdered, my dear captain, murdered!"

"Murdered; NO," wailed the poor old man, in a voice perfectly indescribable in its blended expression of consternation, wonder, horror, and extreme anguish.



"Yes! yes! yes! murdered, and in her bedchamber, and dragged away and cast into the sea."

"NO! I say NO! it cannot, it shall not be true! Where is her husband? where is Fulke Greville?"

"Oh, it was himself that did it. It has been brought home to his door. He has been committed to prison to wait his trial."

"No, I say no, it is as false as h——! Daney is alive and well! Fulke Greville loves her as his own soul! They are away now somewhere, billing and cooing! DANEY! my little DANEY! answer me, child! where are you?" screamed the captain, throwing off Miss Hit, rushing from the room, and filling the whole house with his agonizing cries.

"Miss Hit, you're a horrible fool! you always were, and now you're a great deal worse! These late events seem really to have deprived you of the little sense you ever had, and to have cast you into your dotage. To go and overwhelm him in that way! You've driven him mad! Listen to him now!" fiercely exclaimed Major Burns, rushing out in search of his old friend, whose sharp, agonized cries of "DANEY! DANEY!" were heard ringing through the upper chambers.

"Help! help! Madame has fainted!" called out the lady's maid, in great alarm.

"A glass of wine, for heaven's sake, quick! the lady seems dying," said Mr. Dunbar, bending over the swooning form of the marquise, but speaking to Miss Hit.

"Go, Mandy, and get it! I'm dying, myself, I believe!" sobbed the poor old body, sinking helplessly into a chair.

Mandy ran and brought it, and Mr. Dunbar knelt by the side of Madame De Glacie, and tried to force a few drops between her closed lips.

"DANEY! DANEY!" sounded the piercing tones of the old sailor's voice, afar off in the attics above.

It was there Major Burns found him.

The major, who had been very much agitated in antici-



pation of the effect this blow would have upon his old friend, now that it had fallen, became composed. He came upon the old man roving wildly through the attic chambers, and calling in a voice of piercing anguish—

“DANEY! DANEY! where are you hiding, you little witch? It is very cruel of you to play off such a trick on your poor old grandpa! Daney! Daney, my child! come out! They are making a jest here of the old man! come to me, my dear! I am old! I am childish! I cannot bear jesting! Daney! Daney, I say!”

“Captain! what! captain! old friend!” cried the major, throwing his arms around him, and trying to stop him in his wild run—“what, captain! old friend! recollect yourself! compose yourself! be a man!”

“Let me go! I want my Daney! I am famishing! freezing, until I find my Daney!—Daney! Daney! where are you, Daney?” he cried, breaking from the little major, and running madly down the stairs.

At the foot of the lowest flight of stairs he was stopped by Mr. Dunbar, who threw out his arms to arrest his progress, and said, earnestly:

“Captain! for heaven’s sake, try to calm yourself! If this be, indeed, true; for the sake of all who depend upon you in this awful crisis, be yourself!”

“Stand out of my way, or I will knock you down! I want my Daney! And I will have her—yes! I will have her, though the earth or the sea has swallowed her! Stand out of my way, I say! When I fell a man I finish him!” cried the phrensied old sailor, hurling the youth from his path, and rushing down into the lower regions of the house, where his voice was soon heard reverberating through the cellars in wailing cries of “Daney! Daney!”

“I must go after him! For Heaven’s sake, send for a doctor. How is the poor lady?” eagerly spoke the little major.

Her maid has got her into bed; she is very ill. I



have already sent to Cornport for a physician. And I will go now and help you to look after the captain; you cannot manage him alone," said the young man, following Major Burns down into the cellars.

But the captain had already traversed their whole extent, and hurried up the back stairs, and out into the grounds, still waking all the silence of the night with agonizing cries upon the name of his lost child. They followed him at a short distance behind, to see that he came to no personal harm. As to restraining him, no two men could have done that with the iron frame of that vigorous old octogenarian, while his nerves were strung to their highest pitch of tension by a phrensy of excitement. Through and through, over and over, round and round the island they followed him, as he strode about, calling in ear-piercing anguish upon the name of his child.

For hours they followed him thus, until at length they noticed that his voice grew weaker, and he reeled in his run. Then once more they attempted to lead him into the house. They came one on each side of him, and took his arms and placed their hands soothingly upon his shoulders, the major saying:

"What, captain! what, old soldier! you that have faced a thousand foes; you that could fight a thousand fields; will *you* yield to the effects of any affliction it may please heaven to send! Rouse yourself, old sea-lion! Think no more of your child; she is at rest! Think of vengeance!"

But their touch seemed only to sting him into new strength; breaking violently from their hold, he ran on, calling as before. But his strength was far spent, he reeled to and fro and staggered as he ran; his voice quavered and faltered as he called, and finally, when near the house again, he fell forward on his face, breathing forth in an expiring voice, the incoherent words:

"Daney, Daney, I can seek you no more, my child; I am dying, and coming to you, my little Daney."



They approached him very cautiously; he was lying quite still. They took his hand; it was cold and pulseless. They raised him gently in their arms; he was quite insensible. They carried him into the house and up into his chamber, and laid him on his bed, where he remained like a dead man.

“Shall I open a vein? I have some skill in bleeding a patient; and always carry a lancet about me,” said the major.

“No; I would prefer that we should leave him to nature until the doctor’s arrival,” answered the young man.

They sat, two anxious watchers, by the sick bed, until the doctor was shown into the room.

He took the very measure that had been previously recommended by Major Burns for the recovery of the patient. He bled the old man; and as soon as he saw symptoms of returning consciousness, he prepared and administered a composing draught that quieted his nerves, and he sank into a restoring sleep. The two anxious watchers remained in the room; the major extended upon the sofa, and the young lawyer seated upon the arm-chair.

Meanwhile the doctor visited the bedside of the lady. He found her sensible, though very weak, and attended by Miss Hit and her own woman, Madame Elise. He gave some careful directions for her treatment, and then retired to the parlors below, with the intention of remaining in the house until the morning.

Of the two sufferers, the lady was the first to recover the possession of her faculties. There were many good reasons for this. In the first place, she was younger and more elastic in constitution; next, she had been inured to suffering; then, she had never, since the infancy of her child, been accustomed to her society; therefore her grief partook of the nature of a severe disappointment rather than that of a cruel bereavement; finally, she was not without hope; and that is a great mental support.



And thus it was that when she had taken the nervine stimulant, prescribed by the doctor, she felt herself stronger and calmer, and turned to Miss Hit and said :

“Madame, it was you, I think, who spoke of my daughter’s fate, for she was my daughter, and only child. Will you now be so good as to tell me all the particulars?”

“Ma’am, it seems to me I never *can* do right, do what I may! You heard how that old brute of a Major Burns blowed me up for telling the captain?”

“No, I did not!”

“Oh, no! so you didn’t! You had fainted! Well, he *did*, then! he called me a horrible fool, and said that I had driven the captain mad! And now, you see, if you should be taken worse through any thing that I should tell you, the blame would be laid on me.”

“I shall not be worse; the danger of the first shock is past; the rest may be very cruel, but it can be borne! Tell me all you know of my child’s fate.”

The major had told the truth of Miss Hit, in one respect. The tragic events of the week *had* precipitated her to the borders of dotage, else she would never have ventured to relate to a fragile, nervous, invalid woman, the horrors of that fatal morning in the bridal chamber. It was well that she did so, however. “Fools rush in where angels dare not tread!” and often the fools are in the right of it.

The lady lay and listened calmly to the whole descriptive narrative, not only of the supposed discovery of the murder, but of Daney’s whole life at the island, as far as it was known to Miss Hit herself—including Daney’s infancy, childhood, and youth; her love, courtship, and marriage; her arrival at the island; her supposed murder and its discovery; the suspicious circumstances that pointed out her bridegroom as the assassin; his examination and his committal to prison.

“And you really suppose Monsieur le Colonel Greville to have been the assassin?” said the lady, with wonderful coolness.



"I do, ma'am."

"Then I do not, Madame!" said the Italian lady.

"But why, ma'am?"

"Simply, Madame, because I do not believe that there has been any murder committed!"

"But, ma'am, consider! the blood upon the floor! the violent disorder of the furniture! the general evidences of a desperate struggle!"

"Those seeming evidences could have been easily arranged for the very purpose of misleading investigation. Whereas if such a desperate struggle as they seem to indicate had really taken place, it must have been heard by every person in the house. Therefore, you see, it could *not* have taken place. Consequently, my child could not have been violently murdered; no—she was quietly drugged and abducted. Her unhappy husband was, no doubt, also drugged into that deep sleep of which he spoke," said the lady, with marvellous calmness, that was due, no doubt, to the powerful nervine she had taken.

Miss Hit began to gasp for breath.

"If I thought—if I thought," she said, "that there was any chance of little Daney being alive, I should break my heart for pure joy."

"She is alive," said the lady, with confidence, "and now I must see Monsieur le Capitaine as soon as possible."

"The captain is very ill; the shock has nearly killed him! he is sleeping now under the influence of an opiate, and the two gentlemen are watching with him," said Miss Hit.

"Nevertheless, as soon as he awakes in the morning, I must be admitted to an interview with him; for I have that to suggest to him which will restore him more effectually than all the doctor's drugs!"

"Ma'am, I think you had better try to go to sleep yourself, if you wish to be able to talk to the captain to-morrow. Here is your second draught; it is time to take it; and really, if you wish to be well, you must lie still and not



“speak another word after you have swallowed it,” said Miss Hit, presenting the potion.

“I believe you are right,” replied the lady, swallowing the liquid, and then composing herself upon her pillow. Madame Elise was already asleep. Miss Hit resolutely settled herself in the large arm-chair and closed her eyes. Her deep, sonorous breathing soon assured the listener that she also was in the land of dreams. It was long, however, before Madame De Glacie’s active brain yielded to the power of the drug, and she likewise fell asleep. It was long after midnight when she fell asleep. Under the influence of the powerful opiate she slept twelve hours—consequently it was very late in the day when she awoke. The composing effect of the drug was entirely past off, consequently with returning consciousness and memory came back the bitter pangs of cruel disappointment and terrible anxiety. But after all, sleep had recuperated her physical powers, and thus she felt stronger to bear mental troubles. She looked around herself. Her attendance was changed. Miss Hit and Madame Elise had both disappeared, and a cheerful-looking colored girl waited beside her. She sat up in bed, and feeling quite equal to the effort of rising and making her toilet, she called upon the girl to assist her.

But Mandy, for it was herself, only ran out of the room and down the stairs, and presently returned, accompanied by Miss Hit, and bringing a strong cup of coffee.

“How do you find yourself this morning, ma’am?” inquired the old lady, sitting down beside the patient, while Mandy offered the cup of coffee.

“I am better, thank you, and quite ready to rise. But how is Monsieur le Capitaine?” inquired the lady, as she received the cup from the negro girl, and quaffed its contents.

“The captain is quite composed; he seems to have come to himself; he appears to understand it all now; and he is sitting up in his chair; to-morrow he is going to visit Mr.



Fulke, I mean Colonel Greville, in his prison; the doctor will not consent for him to go to-day."

"Will you send and inquire when he will receive me?"

"He will see you as soon as you please, ma'am. He asked for you the first thing when he came to himself this morning; but the doctor would not allow you to be disturbed."

"Then send and let him know that I can be with him in ten minutes, if convenient to himself."

"Mandy, you go and tell your master that Madame De Glacie is awake, and will visit him almost immediately," said Miss Hit.

Mandy disappeared to do her errand. Madame De Glacie made a hasty toilet, and had quite completed it by the time that Mandy returned to say that her master would receive the lady at once.

"Will you be so good as to attend me, Madame?" inquired the marquise.

Miss Hit got up, panting and blowing, and prepared to comply. They went together to the captain's apartment, which was a spacious front room on the right hand side of the central hall, and, of course, directly opposite to the fatal bridal chamber, which, by the way, had been the temporary sleeping apartment of Madame De Glacie. They found the captain seated in his large arm-chair at the open window. An untasted breakfast stood neglected on a little stand by his side. He looked fearfully broken since the night before. He tottered to his feet to greet his guest, but immediately sank back exhausted into his chair. Even that little effort had been too much for his exhausted nervous system.

But the lady approached him with looks full of sympathy, compassion, and respect, saying, as she took both his hands:

"Courage! my dear and good friend! your little Daney is not dead; there never was any proof of her death; nor



even any good reason for supposing her dead; therefore, she still lives; I feel sure of it; I, her mother, who cannot be deceived!"

"Ah, then, Madame, if such be the case, if she has not been basely murdered, what then has become of her?" moaned the captain.

"She has been abducted, just as she was before, by the same parties, and for the same purpose! I feel well assured of that! but courage, Monsieur! we shall see her again! She is no longer a baby, as she was in the first instance! She is a young woman with memory, judgment, and will, if I read her portrait aright. She will not suffer herself to be wronged; she will find means of escape, or of making her situation known to her friends. In the meantime, we must advertise in all the papers of the country, stating the facts of her abduction, describing her person, and offering large rewards for any information concerning her. Cheer up, Monsieur le Capitaine! I have not found my long-lost daughter, after so many years of separation, to lose her again so soon forever. I have more trust in Providence than to believe that! We shall recover her soon. She will be safe. Be sure of that. Courage, old friend!"



## CHAPTER XXX.

## HOPE.

Hope, of all passions, most befriends us here;  
Passions of prouder name befriend us less.  
Joy has her tears; and transport has her death;  
Hope like a cordial innocent, though strong,  
Man's heart at once inspirits and serenest;  
Nor makes him pay his wisdom for his joys;  
'Tis all our present state can safely bear  
Health to the frame and vigor to the mind!  
A joy attemper'd! a chastis'd delight,  
Like the fair summer's evening calm and bright,  
'Tis man's full cup, his paradise below.—*Young's Night Thoughts.*

BUT hope is slow to return to the aged. The old man looked mournfully at the fair speaker, saying, sadly:

"Madame, Major Burns has just left me; he presided at the investigation of this mystery; he has told me every thing; and he leaves me without a hope in the world."

"I also have heard all, Monsieur, and I remain full of hope," said the lady, firmly.

"What! have they told you *all*?" exclaimed the captain, in astonishment.

"Every thing!"

"The—the state of her bedchamber on the morning of the discovery?"

"Yes, Monsieur!"

"The facts brought out in the investigation before the magistrates?"

"Yes, yes, Monsieur!"

"And—and—the—the—strong circumstantial evidence against my nephew?" inquired the old man, in a deeply agitated and quavering voice.

"Yes, yes, yes, Monsieur le Capitaine. I know all that is known to any one in this house."

"And you still hope?"

"And I still hope!"



"Ah, Madame, you so galvanize this dead body that I am back to life again! But give me the grounds of your hope? How do you get over the desperate struggle for life in her bedroom?" eagerly inquired the captain.

"Simply, by knowing that no such desperate struggle, with its accompanying shrieks, and groans, and falls, could possibly have taken place without having aroused the whole house! No one in the house heard a sound that night; therefore, no such struggle could have taken place; and, therefore, the false evidence of this imaginary struggle was artfully produced for the purpose of misleading investigation. This could easily be done by quietly overturning a few chairs, drawing away a few tables, and rending a few draperies——"

"But the spots of blood, Madame?"

"Dropped, probably, from some one's finger, cut for the very purpose."

"But the facts brought out during the magistrates' investigation?"

"All those facts were manufactured by the kidnappers."

"And—the circumstantial evidence against my nephew?"

"Mere coincidences."

"Then you do not believe that Fulke Greville could have had any hand in this murder?" breathlessly exclaimed the captain.

"NO!"—emphatically answered the lady—"how could he have had—being *your* nephew?"

"God bless you, for those words, lady; for I know that he could not have had!"

"Besides, I repeat, no murder has been committed! This is a case of kidnapping! and the kidnappers, to conceal their own crime, have artfully arranged all these false signs, to produce the impression that they, in fact, have produced, namely—that the bride has been assassinated by her bridegroom! Listen, Monsieur le Capitaine! to explain the reason of my belief, I must go back some years, to the



date of my daughter's infancy. My attorney has told you of her first abduction by supposed gipsies?"

"Yes, Madame."

"But he did not pretend to assign any motive for the abduction?"

"No, Madame, he did not."

"No; for no one except myself ever suspected that motive; but a mother's instincts are not to be deceived. I knew the instigating motive and the instigating man. I could have put my hand upon the man and laid bare the motive!"

"And you forbore to do so, Madame?"

"Yes; for moral conviction, however strong, is not legal evidence. I never breathed my suspicions, or rather, I should say, my certain knowledge of the criminal to any human being. To have done so would have been to show my cards before I had an opportunity of playing them! in other words, it would have put the criminal on his guard. But to you, Monsieur, I feel that I can safely impart this knowledge."

"Indeed you can, Madame! The vital interest I feel in little Daney would teach me discretion, even if I had never possessed that virtue," said the captain, earnestly.

"I am sure of that, Monsieur, and so I will go on with my explanations. The criminal, then, of whom I speak, is my brother-in-law, the younger brother of my husband, the present Marquis De Glacie. I am certain that it was at his instigation that my child was first stolen."

"Good heaven, Madame! the child's own uncle! the orphan's natural guardian! He who should have stood toward her in the place of a father!"

"Even so, Monsieur, for he was a bad man!"

"An unnatural monster, and no man! But the motive, Madame! the motive!"

"It was sufficiently obvious, Monsieur! it was to get possession of her vast wealth; for my darling, though she



could not heir her father's large landed estates, yet inherited a vast funded property, which, in case of her dying unmarried, fell to her father's younger brother, the present Marquis De Glacie !”

“Oh, lady, lady, be sure of what you say, before you accuse a human being of so black a crime !” cried the old man, recoiling in horror from the tale that had been told him.

“I am sure of it, Monsieur, although I may not have legal evidence to prove it. Listen farther: when my husband died, and the present marquis succeeded to the title and estates, he, the last mentioned, was very poor, and very deeply in debt. Nothing but an infant girl stood between himself and a vast funded property that would have enabled him to pay his debts and also support his new rank with great magnificence. When he came down to the chateau De Glacie to superintend the funeral of his brother and to take possession of his estates, he pressed us to remain his guests for as long a time as we might find it agreeable to do so. I, though instinctively shrinking from him, yet finding no rational cause for my aversion, and, above all, magnetized to the spot that held my dear husband's remains—for he was laid in the family vault under the chapel attached to the chateau—consented to remain for a while. Well, Monsieur, three weeks after that my child disappeared under circumstances that led every one to the conclusion that she had been drowned——”

“Good heaven !” exclaimed the captain.

“It was lovely summer weather, and she had been permitted to walk out in the grounds, attended by her nurse, my poor Elise. They wandered down toward a beautiful stream of water, upon whose banks the shrubberies were very thick. The child rambled about, pulling wild flowers, filling her straw hat with them, and bringing and emptying



them in the lap of her nurse, who remained seated under a tree. At last the little one was gone longer than usual. The nurse arose and called her, but she did not answer; ran and looked for her, but she did not appear. Elise became alarmed and rushed through and through the shrubberies, crying aloud upon the name of her nursling. But no response came from the thick green bushes. She ran down to the stream; the banks of the stream were well protected by thick growths of interwoven bushes—there seemed not a possibility that the child could have passed where a man would have found a great difficulty in breaking through. And yet, down one little place, the bushes were lightly pressed and broken as if something had rolled down them to the water; shreds of black *berége*—such as had formed the orphan's mourning dress—fluttered upon the twigs, as if rent off in passing; worse than all, her little straw hat, with its black ribbons, was floating on the water. Poor Elise went distracted on the spot, and rushing to the house, spread consternation and horror through the family with the news that little Astrea had tumbled into the stream, and was drowned!"

Here the lady paused and gasped for breath, as if suffering under some overwhelming memory.

The deepest sympathy is always dumb. The captain could make no comment. His impulse was to draw her silently to his heart, as he would have drawn his little Daney in her troubles, or his own child, had he possessed one. But he did not dare even to take and press her hand, so his sympathy seemed dead as well as dumb.

After a little while the lady continued:

"I cannot—no, I cannot dwell upon the distress that followed! You can figure to yourself how all the household rushed down to the stream; how the poor little floating hat was picked up from the spot where it had lodged against a ledge of rocks; how all the neighborhood was



roused ; how the stream was dragged for the body, and no body found ; how it was next, at a great cost of time and labor, drained, and still no body found ; and how at last it was demonstrated, beyond all manner of doubt, that no body had ever been drowned there ; for, you see, the stream was narrow and deep, and the current strong ; and below the spot where the child was supposed to have fallen in, the stream was crossed by a high ledge of rocks, against which every thing that was carried down by the current lodged. If the child had fallen in, her body must have been found either at the bottom of the stream, when it was drained, or else lodged against the ledge of rocks. It was found neither at one place nor the other ; therefore it had never been in the stream ; and all these appearances of the shredded dress and the floating hat had been arranged for the purpose of producing the impression that she had been drowned. All these investigations had been made, and all these conclusions arrived at without my assistance, and while I was still prostrated with grief. But as I recovered from the first shock of great sorrow, and understood the position of affairs, I set on foot the most diligent inquiry. I soon learned that a fair-haired child had been in the possession of some wandering gipsies on the road to Calais. I followed them in person. I traced them to Calais, thence to Dover, thence to London ; everywhere, when I inquired, hearing of the fair-haired child, with the gang of swarthy gipsies ; but in the wilderness of London I lost them !”

“That is easily understood, Madame ; for the kidnappers must have only passed through and gone down immediately to Liverpool and taken passage for America,” said the captain.

“Yes, Monsieur, and that was the reason why all my future efforts to discover my child, efforts confined to Europe alone, proved failures, so that I never even heard of her again until I saw her portrait in the *Boulevards-des Italiens*. I never returned again to the *Chateau de Glacie*.



I could not endure the place. A strong conviction had taken possession of my mind, that the Marquis de Glacie had instigated the theft of the child. I spoke of this conviction to no one; but for a long time I secretly watched him; I saw enough to deepen and confirm my conviction of his guilt, though not enough to prove it upon him. I saw, also, reason to suppose that he—a peer of France—was connected with a band of desperadoes, composed of both males and females, whose head quarters are in Paris, but whose agencies exist in every large city in the world, and in every grade of society; whose profession it is to prey upon their fellow-creatures, both at home and abroad, both upon land and sea; whose existence is known to the police, yet whose art has hitherto shielded them from punishment.”

“Madame, all this is very shocking,” said the half-stupefied captain.

“Monsieur, it is true. It was through the agency of this fraternity of evil the abductions of my daughter were in both instances accomplished. And now, to return to the point from which we started. To prove that no murder has been committed, I have only to call your attention to the similarity of artifice in the first abduction and the last one. In both instances it was an abduction attempted to be disguised as a death—in the case of the infant an accidental death by drowning; in the case of the bride a murder by her bridegroom.”

“But, Madame, I do not understand how it was that these wretches spared the life of the child, or afterward of the lady, when it was in their power. Surely it is but a short step from such a crime as theirs to that of murder.”

“Monsieur, I have heard that this fraternity of the fiend stop at bloodshed—that the rules of their order forbid it except in defence of their own lives. I do not know how this is. It is only a rumor. Paris is full of rumors concerning this dreaded, secret, yet all-pervading band. You



see, however, by what I have told you, that all those seeming signs of assassination were only arranged to deceive. Astrea has been carried off. But for them to accomplish this, they must have had confederates, who drugged the wine of the bridal pair, and afterward, opened the doors to the abductors. Monsieur, now that we are on the true track, believe me we shall find our lost one."

"Heaven grant it, Madame! This hope gives me more strength than all the doctor's drugs. But—confederates in this house! a house full of old and tried family servants!"

"And no strangers, Monsieur?"

"Eh! stop! let us see! Aye, to be sure! there is a French *femme-de-chambre*, who came over with my little Daney from Paris, and also a *chéf-du-cuisine*, that I was so foolish as to engage in Washington."

"Monsieur, one or the other is a confederate of the kidnappers! have both detained!" said the lady, eagerly.

"Madame! if you think that, I'll be dashed (I was going to say, and I beg your pardon for it), if I do not have them both before me immediately," said the captain, violently ringing the bell.

It was answered by Mandy.

"Send the French maid and the French cook to me directly," said the captain.

"Please, marse, they've gone, sir," said Mandy.

"Gone!" exclaimed the captain.

"It is a confirmation," said the lady.

"Yes, sir, they are gone. After Marse Fulke Greville was 'rested, they 'lowed how they couldn't demean themselves by staying in the sarvice of gentlefolks as got themselves murdered, or took up for murder, and how they'd rather lose their quarter's wages first! And so they told Miss Hit; and they packed up and tuk theirselves off in the Busy Bee, as she passed the day afore yes'day."

"It is confirmation," said the lady once more. "But where does the Busy Bee go?"



"To the City of Baltimore—one of our largest seaports."

"Then they have escaped us. So now let us turn our attention to the one enterprise of recovering our lost one. My attorney, Mr. Dunbar, has business that requires his presence in New York almost immediately. He will leave to-morrow, returning with the carriage and horses that brought us down. We will draw up advertisements, and charge him with the duty of having them inserted in all the papers. We, Monsieur le Capitaine, had better remain for a few days in this neighborhood, and pursue our investigations here. I can perhaps find fitting lodgings in Cornport."

"Madame, yes, it is better that we remain here for the present, not only to pursue our investigations into this mysterious affair upon the spot where it occurred, but also to afford comfort and support to one who is suffering at once under an unparalleled bereavement and an unjust accusation. I refer to Fulke Greville, my nephew."

"And my son! You are right, Monsieur."

"But, Madame, I hope you will not wound me by thinking of any other lodging, while you remain in this neighborhood, than that which shelters my own gray head! My house is poor, lady, compared with your mansions in Italy and in France; yet it is perhaps more comfortable than any lodgings you could find in Cornport. I am an unfortunate wretch of an old bachelor, it is true; but then I have at the head of my household, a lady of advanced years and immaculate reputation. Madame, I beseech you, therefore, to do me the honor of making my poor house your home."

"I thank you, Monsieur le Capitaine. It only needed that I should know it would be agreeable to yourself to make it very pleasant to me!"

"Could Madame la Marquise doubt that?"

"And, Monsieur le Capitaine, I will leave you to repose for a few hours, while I go and have a consultation with my lawyer," said the lady, rising and slightly curtsying as she withdrew from the room.



The Marquise De Glacie went directly to the library, whence she despatched a servant to summon Mr. Dunbar. The young lawyer came promptly.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE PRISONER.

Thou shalt not see me blench  
Nor change my countenance for this arrest ;  
A heart unspotted is not easily daunted.  
The purest spring is not so free from mud,  
As I am clear from treason.—*Shakespeare.*

EARLY the next morning, two departures took place from the island. The young lawyer returned to Washington, on his way to the North, and the old captain, accompanied by the fair marquise, set out for the town where Fulke Greville remained in prison.

We accompany the latter.

They went in an open carriage, for the road lay through the deepest shades of the forest. The distance was twenty miles on the mainland, and thus it was high noon before they entered Lemingham.

The prison was a common-place, square, brick building, of moderate size, whose grated windows alone proclaimed its character. It stood in the principal street of the city, with the court-house on the right, the market-house on the left, and a large hotel on the opposite side of the street.

It was neither term-time nor market-day; the court was not in session nor the farmers in town; the streets were nearly deserted.

Captain Fuljoy drew up before the jail, sent in his card, and was immediately admitted. He left the lady in the carriage, and followed the turnkey to the cell occupied by Fulke Greville.



"A gentleman to see you, sir," said the turnkey, opening the door, ushering in the captain, and locking him in with the prisoner.

Captain Fuljoy found himself in a narrow cell, lighted by a grated window opposite the door, and furnished with a cot bed, a wooden table, and a bench.

Fulke Greville was standing at the window, looking out. At the entrance of the captain, he turned around, and in an instant was locked in the arms of his uncle.

"My best friend!"

"My poor boy!"

These were the first words, uttered simultaneously, that passed between them.

"This visit, and especially this greeting, assures me that you do not believe one word of the mad charge laid against me!" said Colonel Greville.

"Believe it? no!" exclaimed the captain, indignantly. "Burns was no better than a Dogberry, and has incontinently 'written himself down an ass,' by signing this committal! But let me look at you, my boy! you have been here four days—four days of imprisonment upon the most insane charge that could be conceived!" And the captain raised the young man's head from his shoulder and gazed in his face.

How changed it was in those few days! how pale, how thin, how haggard with suffering!

The captain slowly shook his head, saying:

"I will not do you the injustice to believe that all this misery is caused by your imprisonment, or by the infamous charge under which you suffer, or even by the impending dangers of your approaching trial. My brave Fulke does not grieve thus for himself."

"No, no! the Lord knoweth that. But—my wife! my wife! Oh! sir, are you aware of all?"

"Of all that you know, and a great deal more besides——"



"Ha!" gasped the young man, "has any news been heard of her? Speak! speak! Has her body been recovered? Are the assassins discovered? Oh, speak!"

"Sit down, Fulke. Compose yourself, and I will tell you. First—there is hope that she lives!"

"He need not have said 'sit down.'" The shock of this announcement struck him down like lightning. He sank upon the wooden bench, clasped his hands together, and strained his eyeballs upon the old man in the mute agony of suspense; for his voice was gone.

"Now be a man, a *soldier*, a CHRISTIAN, Fulke! and listen calmly to some explanations I have to make. And that you may do so with the more ease, I tell you in advance that my little Daney lives," said the captain, seating himself beside the young man, and commencing his strange narrative, from the moment of his receiving the visit of Mr. Dunbar to his interview with the marquise; their land journey to Cornport; their arrival at the island; their sudden shock on hearing of the disappearance of the bride and the arrest of the bridegroom; the story told by the marquise; the hopes entertained of the safety of the bride; the measures taken for her recovery; and finally, the presence of Madame de Glacie in the carriage below.

Colonel Greville had not listened to this narrative in calmness, stillness, or silence. His passionate love was not like the disinterested affection of the mother or the guardian. The thought of his bride's abduction was more terrible to him than the certainty of her death. He had interrupted the narrator many times with groans, exclamations, or gestures of desperation. Now, at the close of the story, he was striding up and down the narrow limits of his cell, with the fierce, quick pantings, and the sharp, short turns of a tiger pacing his den.

"The lady waits below. Will you see her?" inquired the captain, arresting the young man's desperate strides.

"See her? yes, no, just as you please! Oh, Heaven,



where is *she* now? Is she safe from insult or offence? Can she defend herself? It were better that she were dead! Oh, sir, do you call this well?—do you call this good news when you tell me that she is not dead, but in the hands of lawless men? Great Heaven! I had rather she had been dead, even though I myself should be doomed to die as her destroyer! Oh, Daney! Daney! not dead! not safe in death! but in more than deadly peril! in the hands of evil men!” shrieked the distracted husband, tearing the hair from his head.

“Fulke Greville, she is in the hands of God. No harm such as that you fear can happen to her! A woman pure in thought, word, and deed, as she is, is fenced around with an invisible guard of angels! Any man offering her the insult you dread, would fall dead at her feet! I do not mean that her life may not perish; but I say that her purity is safe! I wonder you do not feel that this *must* be true! I know it in my interior consciousness. Down on your knees, profane boy, and pray Heaven to forgive the blasphemy of your doubts!”

The earnest, fervent, inspired words of the old man, fell like a spell of power upon the stormy passions of the younger one, calming him, with deep reverence be it spoken, as the word of Christ calmed the raging sea. He came and sat down again upon the wooden bench, saying—

“You told me the mother of my love was waiting; we must not keep her so any longer; indeed, I am anxious to receive her; will you be so good as to bring her at once?”

“Why that is as it should be; yes,” replied the captain, rising and going to the door to open it.

“The devil!—(I was going to say)—they’ve locked me in! This is rather disagreeable!” he exclaimed, trying in vain to open the door.

“Knock loudly, the turnkey is probably at the other end of the passage,” said Colonel Greville.

The captain knocked, kicked, and shook the door, and



called aloud; but all quite in vain. No notice whatever was taken of his uproar.

"What the fiend (I was going to say) do they mean? Will they detain ME here as a prisoner, and be ——, hem!"

"The turnkey has left the upper passage, sir! He has probably gone down to his dinner; it is noon, you see," said Colonel Greville.

"Hem! and how long, pray, does it take his worship to dine?"

"They have an hour, I think."

"And I am to stay locked in here all that time?"

"Unless you can make them hear, yes, sir."

"Hallo! help! here! help! Some one ahoy!" shrieked the captain, beating, kicking, and shaking the door.

The most imperturbable silence swallowed up the noise.

"Oh, Fulke! but this is horrible, my boy! to be shut up in a place and not to be able to get out!" gasped the dismayed captain, out of breath with his exertions, and suffocating also under the sense of imprisonment.

"Be patient, sir; they will be here presently."

"Patient! I could be patient in pain, but not in prison ——Hallo! help! ahoy, down there! are you all asleep, dead, or drunk? Ahoy, I say! hallo! help! here! I'm smothering!" roared the captain.

The horrible hubbub must have reached somebody's ears at last. There was a rapid running about of feet—a hurried calling of voices—a rushing round, and then the door was suddenly unlocked, and the terrified face of the turnkey appeared at it, inquiring, in a frightened voice—

"What has happened?"

"What has happened?" May the demon fly away with you (I was going to say), you have locked me in here for an hour!" cried the exasperated old man.

"But we always lock the cell doors when we leave them," said the turnkey, in explanation.

"The deuse you do! Oh, Fulke! this is dreadful! If



it suffocates me to be locked in for an hour, even when I know that I can be let out the moment I can make myself heard, what must it be to you, when——Oh! my dear boy!”

“Sir, I cannot feel for myself! Every selfish feeling is absorbed in one immense trouble—anxiety for Daney! But you forget that her mother is waiting.”

“I’ll go and fetch her! And mind, Mr. Turnkey! stand on guard on the outside of the door, if you must; but don’t turn the key on the lady!” said the captain, as he left the cell, and hurried down to the prison gates.

In five minutes he re-appeared, leading in the marquise.

Fulke Greville arose, and stood up respectfully to receive his distinguished visitor. The lady threw aside her long, black veil, revealing a sweet, pale, faded face, softly shaded by dimmed golden ringlets.

“Madame, I have the honor to present to you your son-in-law, Colonel Fulke Greville. Colonel Greville, Madame la Marquise de Glacie!” said the old gentleman, who never forgot the stately courtesy of his old-fashioned school of manners, or failed in ceremony even in the prison cell.

Fulke Greville was in the act of bowing lowly before the lady, when she put out her hands, and taking both his, looked into his troubled face with infinite tenderness, saying:

“We who meet in mutual sorrow must not meet as strangers. It is your mother who speaks to you, my son!”

“May I be worthy to be called so, dearest lady,” replied Fulke Greville, lifting her hands to his lips.

“But you are much more than worthy—being *his* nephew!” replied the marquise, turning upon the old man a look full of confidence and affection!

“Ah, if it were not for Mary in heaven, and my own eighty years!” murmured the tender-hearted old tar, as he seated himself on the side of the cot bedstead.

So much of human absurdity mingles with men’s holiest emotions.



"And oh! to reflect that in addition to the sorrow of your bereavement you suffer the shame of this false, mad accusation!" said the lady, tenderly, as she placed herself upon the wooden bench, and motioned her son-in-law to take a seat by her side.

"Yes! that is just what he calls it, Madame! a 'mad accusation!'" assented the Captain, gruffly.

"Then you, even before you knew me, never believed it!" said Colonel Greville, turning to the lady.

"Believed it! No! Did any one really believe?"

"That is not possible, Madame! Even Burns, the magistrate that sent him to prison, could not have credited the charge. But you see, as you said yourself, Madame—moral conviction is not legal evidence—and the magistrate was obliged to act in accordance with the evidence before him, and not with the convictions within him!" grumbled the old man.

"And so a jury may be compelled to act! who knows?" remarked Fulke Greville.

"When does the court meet, Monsieur?" inquired the marquise.

"Not for two months, Madame."

"Ah! long before that time we shall have recovered our child!" exclaimed the mother. Then turning to Colonel Greville, she asked—"Monsieur le Capitaine has told you the facts upon which I found these hopes?"

"Yes, dear Madame."

"We must now, then, talk not of a defence that will scarcely be needed; but of the means of releasing you from confinement. Monsieur le Capitaine," she said, addressing the old sailor, "should we go together to the magistrate, and should I, the mother of the missing girl, make the same representations to him that I have made to you, would he not believe me and release my son upon bail?"

The old man dropped his head upon his hand in painful thought for a few moments, and then replied:



"I do not know! Old Burns is a perfect incarnation of unjust justice. There is no telling what he will suppose to be his duty, but whatever he does think it, that he will do and nothing else! But most certainly we will make the effort, Madame, and just as soon as the major returns from Creekhead, where he went directly after his interview with me."

"Ah! when will that be? It is terrible for my son to remain here."

"He said this evening possibly, or else to-morrow certainly."

"This evening possibly! Then, Monsieur, let us not lose the chance of seeing him this evening. If he should listen to us favorably, the order for our son's release may be forwarded immediately, so that he need not spend another day in prison."

"As you please, Madame. We can take Burnstop on our way home."

"Then we have certainly no time to spare! Fulke Greville, my son, we leave you only to serve you!" said the lady, rising and folding her mantle around her.

The captain rapped on the door to summon the turnkey, who was on guard on the outside. He found no difficulty in getting out this time. The door was immediately opened. The captain and the marquise took an affectionate leave of the prisoner and departed on their mission.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

## BURNSTOP.

Yes! there thou art upon the hill,  
By waving poplars circled still,  
Old house! that time hath deigned to spare  
Mid sunny slopes and gardens fair.  
The woodbine through the casement peeping,  
The pampered cat on cushion sleeping,  
The pleasant haunt with books o'erspread,  
The antique chairs, the curtained bed.—*Mrs. Sigourney.*

THEY ordered the coachman not to spare the horses, which were now refreshed by food and rest, and quite ready for the road again.

They drove rapidly through the intervening wooded valley, and late in the afternoon began to ascend the low range of hills that skirted the creek, and upon the summit of which was situated the farm of Burnstop.

The sun was setting when their carriage drew up before the house.

It was a long, low edifice of gray stone, built upon the top of the hill, and deeply shaded with great forest trees.

A grass-grown, elm-shaded old avenue led from the front gate straight up to the front door, which was sheltered by a rustic porch of timber with the bark on, overgrown with vines.

The lady and the captain alighted before this door, which was, as usual at country houses in old Maryland, wide open, giving a vista straight through the hall to the back door, which was also open, affording a view of a green lawn, planted here and there with flowering shrubs.

"I don't see any one about! And there are no bells in the house, and no knocker on this door. Very different, this, from your Italian palazzo and French chateau, Madame!"

"No, Monsieur; some of our houses are also neglected," replied the lady, courteously.



The old man applied his own hard knuckles to the old oaken door with such effect, that a negro boy made his appearance from the back premises to answer the appeal. This was a remarkable specimen of the very stupid, not to say idiotic, country negro.

"Has your master returned home?" demanded the captain.

"Y-e-s, s-i-r," drawled the boy.

"Go and tell him that Captain Fuljoy is here, and wishes to see him immediately."

"Y-es, s-ir," answered the boy, but without stirring from the spot.

"Well, why the d—(I was going to say) don't you go along! Hurry, hurry, you sleepy fellow!"

"Y-e-s, s-i-r," repeated the boy, rooted to the floor.

"Why, you little black imp, what do you mean by standing there, and looking me in the face, and saying, 'Yes, sir,' and not going? Fly away with you! Vanish! Tell Major Burns that Captain Fuljoy is waiting to see him! run!"

"I darn't, sir!" wailed the lad.

"Darn't! Why darn't you? Are you crazy? I believe you are! Go directly!"

"'Deed I darn't, sir; Miss 'Nellopy won't let me; no more won't Miss Etty."

"What's the reason? Why won't they let you? What the mischief does it mean?"

"I darn't sturbe marster, sir—he's a-dyin'!" whimpered the child.

"DYING!" echoed the captain, starting back like one who had received a blow, while Madame de Glacie came to his side, and looked with wondering eyes from him to the boy.

"Dying! did you say dying?" repeated the captain, stooping and looking the boy in the face.

"Y-e-s, s-i-r," sobbed the child, bursting into tears at the sound of his own words.



"Madame, take this chair and rest yourself, while I go to find out the truth of this. It is of no earthly use to question this poor simpleton. I know where the major's room is, and will seek him there," said the captain, placing an old-fashioned, home-made, chip-bottomed arm-chair for the visitor's accommodation.

The lady sat down in the hall, while the captain went slowly and softly up the stairs, and rapped lightly at the door of a front room on the right hand.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE DEATH OF MAJOR BURNS.

The sceptered king, the burthened slave,  
The humble and the haughty die;  
The high, the low, the base, the brave,  
In dust, without distinction, lie.  
The prince who kept the world in awe,  
The judge whose dictate fixed the law,  
The rich, the poor, the great, the small,  
Are levelled; death confounds them all.—*Guy's Fables.*

THE door was opened by a little bit of a dried up and withered old woman, with a very dark skin, and very black eyes and hair.

She was Miss Penelope Pinchett, the housekeeper and nurse of the old bachelor.

She came out silently, closing the door after her, and putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"What is this that Bobbin tells me, Miss Penelope? Is the major really ill?" inquired the captain.

"Oh, is it you, Captain Fuljoy? I thought it was the doctor, first," said the little old lady, taking the handkerchief from her face, and looking with red eyes up to the visitor.

"You see that it is I. I hope the major is not seriously ill?"



"Oh, captain, I am so glad you have come. I would have sent for you, only I thought you were not able to leave home. I hope you are better, sir."

"I am better ; but the major ? I hope he is not seriously ill ?"

"Oh, sir, he is dying, there is not a hope in the world," said Miss Penelope, taking the old man's arm, and leading him away to the window at the front of the passage, where they sat down upon two chairs.

"What is the matter with him ? When did he return from Creekhead ? Has he over-exerted himself by the journey ?" inquired the captain, hurrying question upon question, after the manner of all excited people.

Miss Penelope replied to all in a few words :

"He never went to Creekhead at all. He came from your house yesterday morning, and complained of feeling a little unwell ; but went on with his preparations for the ride, because his business at the Head was very important. But his indisposition increased faster than his preparations went on ; and so before he could get ready to go, he found himself compelled to give up his journey. He retired to bed early ; became so extremely ill in the night that we had to send for a doctor. He left the patient at noon, but promised to be back again this evening. I thought that you were he."

"What is the nature of his malady ?" inquired the captain.

"Cholera," sobbed the housekeeper.

"There, I knew it, He always would eat soft crabs, and he had just as well eat fried spiders ! and they are sea spiders, and nothing else ! Let any one look through a microscope at a spider, and see if they could tell it from a crab ! or through an inverted telescope at a crab, and see if they could tell it from a spider ! I would as soon eat a baked tarantula ! But I hope it is not so serious with him as you think it, Miss Penelope. Can I see him ?"

"Yes, you can see him, sir ; it will do him no harm to



see you ; he is past being hurt now ; he is sinking fast," said the housekeeper, leading the way to the chamber door, opening it, and admitting the visitor.

The room was in semi-darkness, the sun having some time set, and the lamps being not yet lighted.

The poor little major lay extended upon his bed in the collapsed stage of his mortal malady—his frame sunken, his face blue, and his breath short.

At the side of the bed knelt poor Etty, her black hair in wild disorder, her face buried in the quilt, stifling her sobs as best she could.

"I am very sorry to see you in this state, old friend," said the captain, approaching the bedside.

"Eh ? what ? you a sailor, and sorry to see a poor old weather-beaten craft approaching port?" said the major, in a faint voice, and with a feeble attempt to smile.

The captain did not reply. His first kind impulse was to say, "It has not come to that yet!" but then he knew that it *had* come to that ; and to deceive a dying man about his state was cruel, even if in such a case deception were possible. So the captain remained silent.

"I am glad you have come, neighbor—very glad ! You will attend to affairs hereafter—after I am in port. These distracted women don't seem to know what they are about," said the dying man, speaking with much difficulty.

"Do as you like with me ; order me about, old friend ; (I came to you on another matter, but let that pass ; you are in no condition to attend to it,") murmured the old man, *sotto voce*.

The sufferer did not seem to catch these last, low-breathed words. He continued :

"I made my will some time ago. I have left my old servants free ; and my old house to Etty ; but the house rent will not support her, poor child."

"Leave Etty to me ; I will take care of Etty," said the captain, who, in the largeness of his heart, would have adopted all the orphans of a devastating war, if necessary.



“Good old neighbor, I thank you, but that must not be. Etty has a relation who has greater claims upon her; a grandmother who has neglected her a long time, but who has at length remembered and written to her. The letter was written a week ago—fortunately, as it turns out, we know where to send her.” The dying man paused to recover his breath, and then continued, though in a feeble tone:

“When I am put to bed finally—Miss Penelope must take Etty to New York, and deliver her up to her grandmother. Then—if you desire it—as you can’t have Etty—you may—if you wish—adopt Miss Penelope, who will be without a home.”

The captain was quite startled by this proposition, for if there was one thing in the world he was afraid of, it was the hatchet face of this sharp little woman; but this feeling was succeeded by one of pure compassion for the homeless creature; so his answer partook of his first fright and his subsequent benevolent courtesy:

“Eh! what! adopt Miss Penn?—Lord bless my soul alive! Oh, to be sure! certainly! with the greatest pleasure.”

“No, I thank you, captain! And I am very much obliged to you, major; but I won’t be separated from the child! I have been with her ever since her mother died, and I won’t leave her now; whoever takes Etty will have to take me too. If the venerable Mrs. what’s-her-name, for I never can remember it, wants her grandchild, she will have to put up with me too,” interrupted the housekeeper.

“I dare say she will! I dare say she will! Be quiet, Miss Penn; don’t excite yourself; but only remember that when you get tired of your city home, my country house is always open,” said the captain, much relieved.

The limbs of the dying man grew icier, his face grayer, his pulse slower, his breathing shorter.

The captain’s sorrow and anxiety became poignant and



insupportable. It was terrible to him to see a fellow-creature go out of this world unattended by the prayers of the church; so he ventured to whisper:

"Would you not like to see a clergyman, Major Burns?"

"Why? No clergyman can attend me upon this journey. My soul must go alone to its Maker!" replied the dying man.

"Our minister has been sent for; I expect him every minute," whispered Miss Penelope.

And the words were scarcely uttered when there came a rap at the door, and the Reverend Mr. Allen was announced.

The minister entered the sick room, bowing gravely in turn to its inmates, and then advanced to the bedside of the sufferer.

The captain and the housekeeper discreetly withdrew, leaving the minister alone with his patient.

On the stairs the captain paused and said to the housekeeper:

"I have a lady waiting down-stairs—Madame de Glacie."

"I have heard the major, poor man, speak of her," interrupted Miss Penelope, suspending her weeping in the excess of her curiosity. "Little Daney's mamma! how very remarkable. And so she is really in this house?"

"And stands in need of refreshment, having ridden from the ferry to Lemingham, and from Lemingham to this place, without breaking her fast," repeated the old man.

"A distance of twenty miles each way! Forty miles without eating any thing! And our dinner has been over for three hours! But I will have half a dozen young chickens broiled directly! It will take no time at all!" exclaimed the little body, flying down-stairs and out of the back door to give her orders, without having more than glanced at the strange lady that so keenly excited her interest.

The captain murmured, as he watched her disappearance:

"Poor little creature! It is a good little soul, after all."



The marquise arose and advanced to meet him, inquiring anxiously—

“And Monsieur le Magistrate?”

“Is dying, Madame! It was no time to speak to him of our own affairs, deeply as they interest us! We must try the other man!”

“And he, Monsieur?”

“His name is Erlingford. A new man, and from what I can gather, either for some unknown reason unfriendly to Greville, or else, perhaps, only anxious to prove his zeal for the administration of justice by great severity.”

“Then there is little to be expected from him, Monsieur.”

“In the way of mercy, but very little. After hearing what we have to communicate, however, he may deem it but just to release Greville upon bail. We shall see; earlier in our acquaintance you bade me hope against hope, Madame. I counsel you now to ‘reck your own read,’ as the Scotch say.”

“Monsieur?”

“I mean—to follow your own maxim, and hope for the best.”

The conversation, that had gone on slowly and at intervals, was here interrupted by Miss Pinchett, who came back to conduct Madame de Glacie to a bedchamber, where she might lay off her bonnet and arrange her hair before luncheon was served.

Meantime, the captain walked up and down the hall in moody silence.

Thus half an hour passed, at the end of which the marquise re-entered the hall, followed by Miss Pinchett, who invited the old man to accompany them to the dining-room, where the luncheon was spread. They sat down to the table, but, fatigued and exhausted as they were, having ridden nearly forty miles since morning without having broken their fast, they could not eat freely; the presence of death in the house had destroyed their appetites.



When the ill-favored meal was over, the captain turned to the lady, and said:

"Madame, it is now much too late to call upon Mr. Erlingford. But if you are sufficiently rested and refreshed, I will now take you back to the isle. After which I shall have to return here to watch the night out beside my old friend. And to-morrow, Madame, we will seek Mr. Erlingford."

The lady silently bowed acquiescence, and arose to prepare for their departure.

Miss Pinchett brought her her bonnet and mantle. The captain placed her in the carriage, and they drove to the shore, where the ferry-boat waited to take them to the isle.

On reaching home, the captain consigned the lady to the special attention of Miss Powers, explained the imminent necessity of his return to Burnstop, and set out immediately. On his arrival, he was met by the clergyman who had been in attendance upon the patient.

"How is he?" inquired the old man.

"At rest. He died half an hour since."

The captain uttered a deep groan, and sank down into the nearest chair. Death is always overwhelming to the sensitive; and the big, brave, old sailor was sensitive as a woman where his affections and friendships were concerned.

"I am compelled to leave the house immediately, having several more sick calls to make to-night. There is a great deal of illness about! But I must entreat you to remain here, and take the direction of affairs, if possible."

"Such is my intention. But the little one? the poor, desolate child, where is she?"

"Miss Pinchett has taken her off to some distant part of the house, and is trying to calm her grief. I hope she will succeed. The grief of children is very transient. They cry themselves to sleep, and forget every thing. And now, sir, I must bid you good-night. If I can be of service to-morrow, let me know."



And so, with a bow, the clergyman went away.

The captain watched by the remains of his friend that night.

The next morning he made all the arrangements for the funeral, which took place on the third day.

It was not until after the funeral that Captain Fuljoy took Madame de Glacie to see Mr. Erlingford.

Their errand was unsuccessful.

The young magistrate listened politely to the statement of the marquise and to the arguments of the captain, which, as they have already been laid before the reader, need not be repeated here.

At their close, he remarked :

“All these circumstances are matters for the future consideration of a jury ; they cannot affect my duty as a magistrate.”

“But the d—(I was going to say)—can you not see, sir, that had this evidence been laid before the justices at the preliminary investigation, this charge against Colonel Greville never could have stood, and his committal to prison never have been made out?” exclaimed the exasperated captain.

“There I totally differ with you, sir ; we should have committed him to prison to await his trial, all the same, and left it to a jury to decide upon the evidence, pro and con. This has been done, and cannot now be undone,” replied Mr. Erlingford, coolly.

“I am aware that the wrong done to Colonel Greville cannot be wholly undone ; that it is to some extent irreparable ; that for one thing, having been once committed, no matter how unjustly, he will have to stand his trial ; and that even you have no power to prevent it ; but what I ask of you is, that in consideration of the information we have just given you, you will release Colonel Greville upon his entering into a recognizance for his appearance at court. I am willing, on my part, to give bail to the amount of an



hundred thousand dollars, if necessary; and this lady, I am sure, will offer as much more," said the captain, earnestly.

"Oh, yes, Monsieur le Magistrate! to my whole fortune's worth."

"Sir, and Madame, I regret to refuse you; but a prisoner committed upon the charge of murder is not a proper subject for bail. And, to be quite plain with you, no amount of money in the universe should bail him."

It was easy to see that all argument would be quite unavailing with this man. And, with a sigh of disappointment from the marquise, and a grunt of disgust from the captain, the visitors arose and took their departure.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### ASTREA'S PURCHASER.

"The vessel in the broad lagoon  
Lay moored with idle sail;  
She waited for the rising moon,  
And for the evening gale.

"Odors of orange-flowers and spice  
Reached her from time to time,  
Like airs that breathe from Paradise  
Upon a world of crime."

ASTREA was locked in her cabin and attended only by Venus. Venus was always let in by the captain, who carefully locked the door upon her and kept the key while she remained, and let her out again himself and locked the door after she had left. Thus passed several days while the ship remained at anchor some miles below the city.

Astrea found this suspense as terrible as any part of her voyage. She had firmly resolved that as soon as she should be taken on shore, she would make her real situation known



to the first persons she should meet, and through them claim the protection of the magistrates. And thus she looked forward to the hour of her landing as to that of her liberty.

But many more days passed, and still she remained confined to the cabin of the ship, and still the ship continued at anchor far below the city.

She questioned her sable attendant—

“Why do we remain so long here, Venus?”

“Hi, chile, what you ax me for? How I know? Might’s well ax de main mas’. Tell yer de cap’n nebber tell me nuffin.”

“But surely, Venus, you can form some idea.”

“Hi, honey, how I gwine form ideas? I nebber went to school. I don’t know nuffin ’t all ’bout it,” persisted the girl, who was evidently in a non-committal, know-nothing humor.

Astrea had known her long enough to understand this occasional caprice, as well as how to manage it. She said:

“I know all you say is the truth, Venus; but I know also that you have a great deal of shrewdness——”

“What dat, chile?”

“Intelligence, sense.”

“Yes, honey, ole marse, Lord bless him, used to say how I was uncommon sensorious; but if I is, I nebber brags ’bout it. I aint wain; I scorns to be!”

“Well then, with all your good sense you must have divined the captain’s motive for keeping us here.”

“But hi, honey, de cap’n’s motive aint diwine at all; it’s more like debilish; dere aint nuffin ’t all diwine about *he*; nor ’ligious, nor rev’reant, nor nuffin; so how I find out what aint dere?”

“But,” said Astrea, changing her phraseology to suit the capacity of her interlocutor, “if you do not *know* why he lingers here, what do you *think*?”

“Well, honey, I tell you, I *spectorate* how he is awaiting for de oders,” whispered the woman.



"The others! what others?"

"Dere now, dat all; *de oders!*" repeated Venus, mysteriously

"But who are the others?" persisted Astrea.

"Well dere, I don't know nuffin 't all about dem."

"But what do you *think*, then?" inquired Astrea, coaxingly.

"Tell you, honey, I don't *know* nuffin 'bout 'em; I don't *think* nuffin 'bout 'em, and I don't even *spectorate* nuffin 'bout dem, dere! You see, chile, I darn't do it; leas' said, soones' mended! You may see 'em yourself some day," said Venus, more mysteriously than before.

And this, in fact, was all that could be got out of the woman.

But Astrea's suspense was nearly over.

The next morning an incident occurred that put her in possession of some idea as to her final destination.

It was about eight o'clock in the morning when Venus, as usual, brought in her breakfast. She sat it down on the table, and then going to the side of Astrea, whispered:

"Somefin gwine happen, honey; cap'n gone on shore in de big boat; mate keepin' de cabin door."

"The captain gone on shore? Gone to the city?" asked Astrea, who, in every incident, hoped that a step was made toward her release.

"No, honey, la! we long way from de city; no, honey, he gone on *shore*, right straight to de cypress swamp; dat all I know."

Various conjectures were hazarded by Astrea, as to the captain's errand, but none seemed satisfactory to herself or her attendant; and at last, the slight meal being over, Venus took up the waiter and carried it away, whispering, as she departed:

"I watch, honey; I watch wid all de eyes I got; and when I bring your dinner I let you know all I fine out."

When Venus left the cabin, Astrea fell into deep and dis-



tressing thought. All her hopes of escape had been based upon the event of her landing in the crowded city, and seeing people to whom she could appeal.

But how if she were landed in the wilderness?

Exhausted by distracting thought, Astrea at length threw herself upon her berth, and turned her face to the little window at the back of it, to catch a breath of fresh air. The little window was open, but a slight muslin curtain drawn before it concealed the occupant of the berth from the eyes of any person outside on the starboard side of the lower deck.

While the captive lay thus, she heard the splash of oars, and looking out between the corners of the curtain and the side of the window, she saw a boat come up to the side of the ship, and the captain, accompanied by a stranger, leave the boat and come on board.

They walked arm-in-arm up and down that side of the deck, conversing in a low tone. Their words were, however, audible to the acute ears of her who was certainly the most interested in the purport of their conversation.

They seemed to be continuing a subject which they had commenced some time previous; and that subject was that of the captive, now the unseen and unsuspected hearer.

"Good-looking, you say?" inquired the voice of the stranger.

"Beautiful—that is, according to your idea of beauty! I do not affect these dark charmers myself! This one is of middle size, exquisitely proportioned; form full, but slender and supple; limbs rounded, but tapering and graceful; head small and elegant; features regular; complexion clear, pale olive; hair and eyebrows raven black; eyes large, dark blue, fringed with long, heavy black lashes. How do you like the portrait?" answered the captain.

"I would rather see the girl," replied the stranger.

"True; what is the use of my presenting her picture when I can present herself. But before I show her to you,



I must confess to you, that pearl of beauty as she is, she has one defect."

"She is sickly! If so I will have nothing to do with her; the other one pined away and died; now I will have no more of *that* nonsense; so if the girl is sickly, our negotiation can proceed no further," said the stranger, in a tone of annoyance.

"She is not sickly. Her health, her *bodily* health, I mean, is uncommonly strong."

"Good! then it is some moral defect; an inclination to steal, or flirt, or lie, neither of which I care for, because either of which I can cure her of with a very little trouble."

"Her defect is no more a moral than a physical one; in fact it is mental."

"Ah! she is a fool; beauties frequently are so; for Nature, impartial in her gifts, seldom bestows any great degree of genius and beauty on the same individual. Be easy; I do not value the girl the less for being a ninny."

"There again you are widely mistaken; the girl is as remarkable for her intelligence as for her good looks."

"Well, then, what in the fiend's name is the matter with her?"

"You have heard of monomania? a species of mental derangement, in which the victim is insane upon only one subject?"

"Certainly."

"Zora has such a malady! With a mind singularly strong and clear upon all other subjects, she is decidedly cracked on one. In a word, she imagines herself to be somebody else."

"A very common case in monomania! I had a wench once who imagined herself the governor's wife! But who does your girl fancy herself to be?"

"Why Mrs. Fulke Greville, formerly Mademoiselle Astrea De Glacie, who was the belle of Washington last season."

"I recollect her; I was in Washington last winter, and saw her at the theatre—a beautiful blonde?"



"Yes! radiantly fair."

"A star! I remember her well! And remember also how appropriate I thought her fantastical name, 'Astrea.'"

"You made her acquaintance, perhaps; you conversed with her?" inquired the captain, with visible uneasiness, fearing most likely that, disguised as Astrea was, her manner and tone of voice might betray her to one who had known her formerly.

"Not I," replied the stranger. "I went very little into ladies' society, and saw the reigning belle only at the theatre, where she was first pointed out to me; and afterward at the Capitol and at the President's levee. But what could have put it into the head of your girl to fancy herself that lady?"

"Oh, who knows? She probably heard a great deal of Mademoiselle de Glacie, especially about the time of her marriage with Colonel Greville, which was very much talked of; and as at that particular crisis my girl Zora had a brain fever, and dreamed of nothing but the beautiful bride, the idea became fixed. It will wear off in time," answered the captain, with an air of indifference.

"Oh, doubtless! And now, if you please, we will take a look at the girl. I have every confidence in your report, Captain, but I never conclude a purchase without seeing my bargain."

"Oh, certainly; come with me, then," answered the captain, and the voices passed out of hearing.

How rapidly one can think in extreme peril! Astrea was appalled, but even in the midst of her consternation decided upon her course of action. She knew that she was quite helpless; that resistance would be entirely useless. She knew that the captain and his crew were perfectly ruthless. She therefore placed her hopes upon this would-be purchaser. She resolved to be calm under the terrible ordeal that awaited her; to be patient until she should leave that fatal ship and reach the land. then to make an



appeal to her purchaser; to explain her real position and the diabolical arts by which she had been reduced to this degradation; and to offer, in the name of her guardian, ten times the amount of the purchase money on condition of being restored to her friends. She had scarcely come to this conclusion, when the cabin door was opened, and Venus entered, threw her arms around the captive, and burst into tears, exclaiming:

"Chile, you is done sold, or good as sold! and Marse Captain done sent me down here to fix you up and bring you on deck."

"I know it, Venus; I have heard all, through the little window. Do not weep. I will trust in God," answered Astrea.

"But I must part wid you, and nebber see you again! nebber!" blubbered the affectionate creature, who, in the isolated companionship of the long voyage, had become deeply attached to the captive.

"Poor Venus! constant partings from those to whom you become attached seems to be your whole earthly destiny."

"Yes, honey; Lord knows it's de trufe! I'm jes' like a tree; always being pulled up and planted some'eres else, and nebber 'lowed to stay long enough to take root!"

"Poor woman! you must look forward, then, to that better land in which, once planted, you will grow and flourish forever; that land where partings shall be no more!" said Astrea, gently drawing the poor black head down upon her bosom.

"Now, chile, I must fix your hair, and 'range your dress, and take you up, nice and pretty, else dere'll be de berry debbil to pay wid Marse Cap'n and me arter you're gone," said Venus, lifting her head.

Astrea took off her net and let her long hair fall.

Venus carefully combed and dressed it, and replaced the net, and then took from a drawer a pretty dress of white brilliantine, which she begged the lady to put on.



"How could a woman's dress possibly have got here? They brought none with me, that is certain," said Astrea, curiosity making itself felt in the midst of her dreadful strait, even as the lighter emotions sometimes pass over the surface of the deepest passions.

"Hi, chile! how I know? All sorts o' things is in dis ship. All I know, Cap'n told me look in dis drawer, and take out dis dress, and put on you," replied Venus, carefully fastening the bodice.

"Are you going to be all day making up your minds to come on deck, you girls down there?" called the voice of the captain from the head of the stairs.

"Come on, chile! come up! don't 'voke dem debbils; 'cause if you do it will be all de wus for you!" exclaimed Venus, in a nervous tremor.

They went on deck and walked on toward the stern, where the captain and the purchaser stood in conversation. The purchaser was a large, stout, old man, dressed in a suit of light gray cloth, and a broad-brimmed, light gray, felt hat. His hair and whiskers were gray, his features were inflamed and bloated, his eyes blood-shot and watery, as if from the effects of habitual dissipation. The expression of his face was good-natured rather than otherwise.

Astrea had taken all this in at one frightened glance, and then stood before her would-be master with bowed head, downcast eyes, and blushing cheeks, that only added grace and brilliancy to her beauty. Venus stood behind, with her apron at her eyes.

The seller and the buyer did not hesitate to comment freely upon this human commodity before her own face.

"This is the girl. Now what do you think of her?" asked the captain.

"Humph," said the other, who, like all purchasers, would like to have depreciated the goods, in order to get it a lower price, "humph, a likely wench enough! but she looks as sullen as the deuse! Now I rather dislike sullen women;



I consider sullenness about the worst fault of temper that I am acquainted with. And besides, this monomania, of which you speak! The more I think of it the more objectionable it seems!" said the man, who, however, could not conceal his real admiration of the beautiful creature before him. His eyes roved with eager covetousness over her graceful form. Astrea hung her head, and crimsoned under this scrutiny.

The eyes of the captain followed, half laughingly, those of the purchaser, who presently said:

"Well, name your price for this girl!"

"What will you give me?" inquired the captain.

"I never set a price upon other people's goods!" answered the purchaser, who was clearly afraid of offering too much.

"Hem! yet you had better make me an offer before I take her to New Orleans, and set her upon an auction block, where you would find many competitors! You know very well how sharp the competition would be for the possession of this girl!" said the captain, maliciously.

At these dreadful words, threatening a degradation of which, even in her most despairing hours, she had never dreamed, the blushes that dyed Astrea's cheeks faded suddenly away; she became as pale as death.

Poor Venus seeing this, and fearing that she was about to sink to the floor, put her arms around her waist and supported her. Astrea's head sunk upon the negro woman's friendly bosom. She had been anxious to be taken to the city, where she might see people to whom she could explain her real social position, and make her appeal for justice; but oh! not to the shameful auction block! not to the degrading gaze of the public! not to the insulting competition of the licentious! The burning stake rather than that.

"Don't you see that you are frightening the poor wench to death with your talk of auction blocks! These girls that are brought from Maryland have never been used to them,



as our wenches are, and so have a foolish horror of them. Put your price upon your property without more dispute; it is your place to do it."

"Mr. Rumford! It was at your own particular request that I should bring you the first good-looking young girl that I should happen to purchase, and submit her to your private inspection before offering her for sale at a public auction, that I am here. Now here is the girl! Look at her, and make your offer!"

"Satan burn you for a sharper! a thousand dollars, then!" said Rumford, naming just half the price he was willing to give.

"A thousand figs' ends!" contemptuously exclaimed the captain; she is worth just ten times that! Why, man, in addition to her beauty, she can sing like a prima-donna, and dance like a ballet-girl! She can read like an elocutionist, and converse like a Parisian! She would turn that purgatory of an old plantation house of yours into a perfect paradise! A thousand dollars, indeed! She is worth ten thousand, if a cent, nor will I take a farthing less than five thousand dollars, which is just half her value! But you, being an old customer, I favor you!" concluded the captain, naming just twice the sum *he* was willing to take.

Such is the manner in which such negotiations are commenced.

Of course, both seller and buyer understood this, and acted accordingly.

"Oh, I see that we are very far from making a bargain," said the purchaser, turning coldly away.

"In that case I had better take her to New Orleans, and set her up at auction. Zora, my girl, you may return to your cabin," said the captain, quietly.

"Stop! be reasonable! take fifteen hundred!" exclaimed Rumford.

"Venus, take Zora away," was the captain's only comment.



“Pooh! you are mad. How much is the very least you will take for her?”

“Four thousand five hundred dollars! not a penny less from the best friend that ever lived!”

“It is madness on my part; but I will give you two thousand!” said Rumford.

Thus, fighting every inch of the distance between the price asked and the price offered, seller and buyer approached each other, until at last a sum was agreed upon, and the sale effected to their mutual satisfaction.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### A DREAM.

She had a home wherein the weariest feet  
Found sure repose;  
And hope led on laborious day to meet  
Delightful close!  
A cottage with broad eaves and a thick vine,  
A crystal stream,  
Whose mountain language was the same as mine  
—It was a dream!

She had a home to make the gloomiest heart  
Alight with joy—  
A temple of chaste love, a place apart  
From time's annoy;  
A moonlight scene of life, where all things rude  
And harsh did seem  
With pity wounded and by grace subdued  
—It was a dream!—*Milnes.*

EACH had arrived at the standard of price that he had fixed upon at first. Therefore satisfaction beamed upon each countenance.

The seller was delighted because he had made an extra profit—knowing full well that the sum for which he had sold his victim was so much clear gain, in addition to that which he would receive for abducting her!

And the purchaser was in raptures, knowing that, if this



beautiful girl had been exposed upon the auction block at New Orleans, she would have brought at least three times the price he had paid for her.

And *not* knowing that the last thing on earth that this trader captain would have dared to do, would be to have exposed this free-born lady, with a tongue in her head, to a public sale in a populous city square.

So each had his private reasons for being extremely well pleased.

And so the poor young victim of this wicked traffic received some of the benefits in the form of kind words.

She still stood encircled by the supporting arms, and with her head reclined upon the gentle bosom of Venus.

"Well, my good girl—Zora I think they call you—look up, let me see your face again, since I have purchased you from this trader. Come—don't be sullen! You will not find me a hard master! Indeed, I am called a weakly indulgent one by all who know me well! Tut, tut, now! don't be stubborn! look up!"

The tone of voice was not unkind; and wishing to conciliate this new arbiter of her destiny, Astrea raised her head, and fixed her eyes upon those of her purchaser with a look so full of gentle dignity, profound sorrow, and earnest deprecation, that the man who encountered it must have been obtuse indeed, not to have understood that it was the expression of a refined, intellectual, and religious gentlewoman.

But Barnaby Rumford *was* obtuse, *very* obtuse! And so he very dimly perceived the meaning of this glance. He spoke up cheerily:

"That is well! Oh, I know it must have been hard for you to leave your native region of country, and harder still to part from friends, perhaps from parents! But, cheer up! You will find a dearer friend than any one you have lost—in me, your master! Lord! a month hence I wonder who will be master and who will be slave!"



Astrea lowered her eyes and shuddered.

"Come, cheer up, your duties will be very light with me, no hard work, not even house work; nothing to do but to please your master, and give orders to his servants. Come now, the boat is waiting. Make up your bundle and let us be off, or leave your bundle, if you like. It does not matter. In three days I will give you a better outfit than you ever had, or even ever saw, in your life!"

But Astrea had dropped her head once more upon the bosom of Venus, where it continued to rest.

"Ah! some favorite fellow servant. Well I'm a generous old dog, I am! foolishly indulgent, as the neighbors say. So if it pains you so much to be separated, I do not mind if I buy the other one too. Captain, are you willing to sell that black diamond? and if so, for how much? Mind, don't say twice as much as you mean to take, for you perceive it is getting late, and we have no time for 'jewing,'" said Mr. Rumford.

Now it happened that the captain particularly desired to dispose of his sable stewardess; first, because he wished to supply her place with a white woman; and secondly, because he was about to sail for England. So, after a little consideration, the captain said:

"This woman is not for sale; but to oblige an old customer, I will let you have her, and at a moderate price too! only sixteen hundred dollars."

"Bosh! you mean eight," said Mr. Rumford.

And as upon the first occasion they wrangled over the price, fighting every inch of the ground until they gradually approached each other, and fixed upon an intermediate sum that proved mutually agreeable.

"And now, my girls, go and make up your little parcels, and when you come back, try to present more agreeable faces. I have done something for your mutual happiness, therefore show your sense of my kindness by your cheerfulness. I hate sullen faces"



So saying, the purchaser retired with the trader to pay the purchase money and receive the bills of sale. In these deeds, Astrea was set down as the mulatto girl Zora, and her faithful companion, as the negro woman Venus.

Meanwhile, these two females, so widely separated by birth and social rank, so closely brought together by misfortune and sympathy, went down into the cabin to make their little preparations for departure.

Venus, with the elasticity of her race, had already recovered her spirits. She spoke to Astrea in a chirping tone.

"Dere now! what you tell me, honey? Trust in de Lord! I did trust in him; and now you see what's come of it! We aint to be separated! Us is gwine to go together! Dat's sumfin."

"That is a great deal; for, oh! Venus, if I had to be taken into that strange wilderness, and into those unknown perils without a friend to depend on, I think my courage must have utterly sunk. Now, having you with me, I can in some degree keep up my spirits."

"True for you, honey; 'sides which, it is such a great blessin' to get offen dis deblish ship, anyhow!"

"And out of that captain's power! I feel it as a great relief!"

"Yes, honey, and more 'sides; I think how de new marster ain't so berry bad! Shows he got some feelin', to buy me, to go 'long o' you! Now, I think if, de bery fust chance you get, you tells de new marster all abouten yourself, he go do you justice! 'deed do I!"

"I think so too! for notwithstanding that dissipation has so reduced him, he must have been a gentleman originally. And, Venus, if he *should* listen to my prayers and restore me to my friends, the first use I should make of my liberty, good woman, would be to purchase you and set you free," said Astrea, affectionately.

"Oh, don't, don't, honey! don't talk so, it do take my



breaf away ! make me a free woman ! dat too much, might's well talk ob making me Queen ob Sheba at once. But if ebber you does come to your own rights, honey, and would buy me for your own servant, I would serve you faithful all my days, 'deed would I."

While talking, Venus was also busily gathering together such articles as she required to take away with her. When she was ready she turned to Astrea and said—

"Come, chile, put on your bonnet."

"I have no bonnet here," answered the poor young captive.

"No bonnet ! Dere now ! Dat 'nother proof how you must 'a' been stole away ! No bonnet ! Ef you'd 'a' been fotch away hones' you'd 'a' had a bonnet ; dat sartain ! Here, honey, you put dis on your head ! It's nice and clean, anyway !" said Venus, producing from her bandbox a white cambric corded sun bonnet.

It was perfectly fresh and sweet, and Astrea felt no objection to wearing it. She thanked the kind lender and put it on her head.

Venus herself possessed many bonnets, but never wore one except on Sundays at church. Upon all other occasions she preferred the coquettish bandanna turban.

They then went up on deck, where their new purchaser awaited them.

"Come, come, hurry into the boat, my good girls ! It is some distance to the landing-place, where the carriage waits us, and we have a long ride before we reach home," he said, good-humoredly enough, as he assisted first Astrea, and then Venus to descend the ship's side and take their seats in the boat.

He then shook hands with the captain and followed them, and took his seat by their side.

The captain waved a mocking adieu as the boat left the ship. The men laid to their oars and rowed rapidly up the river, keeping near the west bank.

Yet it was an hour before they reached the landing-place,



a mere small pier and a wood-cutter's cabin, where the steamboats sometimes stopped to take in wood.

Here they went on shore, and while the boat that brought them sped back to the ship, they walked to a spot where a plain travelling carriage stood under the shade of a large cypress tree, and in charge of a negro coachman. By the order of the master, the two women entered the carriage and seated themselves side by side on the front seat. He followed them in and sat alone in lordly ease upon the back seat, facing them.

And so the carriage drove off.

Their way lay over a raised corduroy road, through an extensive cypress swamp, where the trees seemed to grow taller and closer together every mile they travelled inland.

Astrea leaned her head from the window for two reasons ; the first was to avoid meeting the embarrassing glances of her purchaser, who sat with his red hands upon his fat knees, staring in stupid delight upon his new treasure, and the other was to gaze at the stately cypress trees that she now saw in native luxuriance for the first time.

Venus, with the sensual indolence of her race, settled herself on the soft, elastic cushions, to enjoy at her ease the motion of the carriage—forgetful of the past, indifferent to the future.

Mr. Rumford remained taking his comfort in the way we have described, until at length his stupidity sunk into lethargy—his lethargy into torpor, he nodded, settled himself into his corner, closed his eyes and went to sleep.

The carriage passed on, and out of the cypress swamp, and into a more open and elevated country.

Venus, who was almost asleep, was roused up by a sudden jolt, which, however, did not awaken her heavily sleeping master.

She yawned and stretched her neck, and looked out of the window to see where they were. Then she suddenly jerked in her head, and with eyes larger than they were before, exclaimed—



"Hi, chile, how dis?"

"What?" inquired Astrea, rousing herself from her painful reverie.

"How we come back *here* 'gain?"

"I don't know what you mean!"

"Why, dis yer is old Ben Lomond, as I tell you 'bout!"

"Ben Lomond is in Scotland," said Astrea, absently.

"Yes, chile, I know *he* is; dat is ef he's livin'! which it aint likely, as it has been so many years since ole marse's grandfather—which he was a Scotchman himself—named dis yer place arter him; which I think it downright sacredligious to name a dumb house and land after a baptize' Christian! I don't hold 'olong o' no sich, as I telled you afore. An' dis yer is de berry ole plantashum house itself! as I neber spectorated to see again as long as ebber I libbed! And how I should be fotch back to it again is more'n I can tell! It's jes like a dream!"

Astrea looked out; but could only see among the gently swelling hills a little green wooded vale, through the thick foliage of which gleamed here and there glimpses of the white stuccoed walls of a country house.

"And is that the house where you were born and brought up?" inquired Astrea, kindly interested in all that concerned her humble companion.

"Yes, honey! de berry house, sure as you lib to see it, where I wur born, and my ole marse afore me. And where ole marse lib so free, carryin' on of his hi-jim-be-lung, entertainin' of dis, and lendin' money to dat, and 'dorsin' notes for t'other, till down comes deaf on to him, and down comes de bailiffs on de 'state! and ebery singly thing sold up! house, and land, and niggers; and ole mist'ess and de young ladies turned out o' doors!"

Here the affectionate creature stopped to wipe her eyes.

"What was the name of your old master, Venus?" inquired Astrea, by way of diverting her thoughts from the household wreck.



"M'Gregor, honey, good ole Scotch name, dey do say: dough some folks will have it as how dey is distantly related to one Robber Roy; which I'll nebber beliebe it any way; 'cause a 'spectable fam'ly like our'n could nebber have no robbers into it. But what puzzles me, how I coming back to de ole plantashum house!" said Venus, recurring to the first mystery.

"But how do you know we are going there? We may be going farther."

"Hi, chile! how we gwine further when we done turn inter de road as lead right t'rough de plantashum up to de house, and no further? But what I want to know, how it is I come dere again?" she persisted, pertinaciously returning to the question.

"You say the old plantation house was sold after your old master's death! Perhaps this new master has become the purchaser, and is taking you home," suggested Astrea.

"Dere! dat it! now see what it is to have a good head-piece! Now why couldn't *I* think o' dat?" exclaimed Venus, in surprise at what she considered the quick wit of the young lady.

The carriage rolled on, took a sudden turn into a circular shaded avenue, and drove up to the front entrance of the house.

Rumford, who had slept soundly through all the jolting of the carriage, was awakened by its sudden stopping. He yawned, stretched his limbs, rubbed his eyes, looked out and said:

"Here we are at home!"



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## THE PLANTATION HOUSE.

It is a shady and sequestered scene,  
Like to those famed gardens of Boccaccio,  
Planted with his own laurel evergreen  
And roses that for endless summer blow,  
And there are fountain springs to overflow  
Their marble basins, and cool, green arcades,  
Of tall, o'er-arching sycamores, to throw,  
Athwart the dappled path, the dancing shades  
With timid coneys, cropping tender blades.—*Hood.*

IN a beautiful grove of tulip poplars and imperial catalpas, stood the old plantation house. It was a long, low, brick building, covered with white stucco and surrounded by a piazza.

"Come, my good girls, get out," said Rumford, as he slowly descended from the carriage and walked up to the front door and knocked.

"Come, honey, make de bes' of it; come out, an' don't 'voke him," said Venus, taking Astrea's hand and helping her to alight. They stood behind Rumford while he thundered at the door, which was at length opened by a negro woman, very large, black, fat, and old, who quite filled up the broad door-way.

"Well, Cybele, you were slow enough coming; really, if you do not move quicker, I shall send you into the fields to find out whether Steppins cannot stimulate you to greater exertions," said the master.

"Better send me to de 'firmary; I'se fitter for dat. Bofe me and Brudder Sat'un ought to a-been superambulated long ago," mumbled the mountain.

"Oh, yes, you and Saturn would persuade me that you are as old as your namesakes, the grandmother and grandfather of all the gods. But come; here are two new companions for you. The yellow girl is called Zora, and she is to be the housekeeper. The black one is named Venus, and



she is to be an extra housemaid. Now show them where they are to lodge, and give them some supper," said the master, passing into the house, and leaving his new purchases to the care of his cook.

"Am I to put Zora inter de—de——"

"Yes, you fool!" snapped Rumford, as he disappeared.

"An' here's anoder! Oh, my good lor', de sin in dis worl'! I wonder dat ole man nebber takes a 'sideration on to his latter en'!" muttered the woman, shaking her head, with dreadful significance.

Then rousing herself, she said:

"Well! come along o' me, chillun! An' you's a-comin' inter a wicked, sinful, mis'able house as eber was; dat I tell you; an' I don't care who hear me say it; I leave tell ole marse so hisse'f to his face; 'cause de 'cordin' angel read it all out to him some day, anyway!" she concluded, as she led the way into the house.

They entered a broad passage running through the centre of the house, walked down its whole length, passed out of the back door, and straight across the back yard to a brick building, in which was situated the kitchen, pantry, and laundry.

The kitchen was the central room. They entered it. It was a spacious apartment, with a cool brick floor, and many pine shelves and tables ranged around the walls. Opposite the door was a large fireplace, at one corner of which sat an old negro man, who might have been Cybele herself in a shirt and trowsers.

This was Cybele's twin brother, Saturn. The way in which the brother and sister received their classical names was this: Ages before, when they were born, their proud mother had appealed to one of the young ladies of the family to find her "handsome names" for her beauties, saying that she was "heartily tired o' Wulcans an' Wenuses an' Jupiters an' Junoes; dey was so common." The young lady suggested Saturn and Cybele—names which, being new to the hearer, so fascinated her imagina-



tion that they were forthwith adopted. Cybele retained hers in its original purity ; but Saturn soon found his corrupted into Satan, and he never forgave his young mistress for "callin' of a Christian baby arter de debbil," as he supposed that she had done. And when it was explained to him that Saturn was by no means Satan, but only an old heathen god who devoured his own offspring, that did not mend the matter at all ; for he declared that in such a case "de monster who ate up his own chillun was worse dan de debbil hisse'f, an' he wouldn't forgib Miss Gertrude worse dan ebber."

So much by way of explanation.

Cybele led her new companions up to the glare of the fire and introduced them in formal style.

"Ladies, my Brudder Sat'un. Brudder Sat'un, dis is Miss Zora an' Miss Wenus."

The grandfather of the gods arose to make a low bow worthy of himself and the ladies ; but suddenly, startled from his propriety, exclaimed :

"W'y 'oman, dis *our own* Wenus ! How do, Wenus ?"

"He, he, he, I gwine see whedder you-dem would know me," tittered the woman.

"How de debbil you think anybody know you in de dusk, an' you wid your head tuck down in yer bosom, an' me thinkin' you thousand miles away !" said Cybele, in a vexed tone.

"Marse Rumford tole you how I was name' Wenus," tittered the girl.

"Yes, but dere's so many Wenuses 'round ! How I know it you ?" grumbled the cook.

"Trufe is, ole 'oman, you's a-gettin' oler and oler ebery day ! You' eyes is a-failen' !" grinned Saturn.

"No oler nor youse'f, sir, if it come to dat ! no, nor yet so ole !" snapped the goddess.

"True, honey ! I's de olest, I 'fesses to it ; half hour olest ! But now look at the ladies a stanin' dere yet, wid



nuffin 'tall to sit down on! Dat's a putty way to 'ceive Wenus back again! An' a puttier way still to 'ceive a strange young lady! Miss Zora, sit here; Wenus, chile, sit there," said the progenitor of all the gods, placing two split-bottom chairs in the coolest corner of the kitchen.

Anxiety, at first stimulating in its effects, is afterward very prostrating. Astrea sank exhausted into one of the seats.

But Venus threw down her bundle and began to help Cybele to get ready the kitchen supper.

"When ole marse have his?" she asked.

"La, gal, not till about ten o'clock," answered the old woman, who was engaged in pouring boiling water from the kettle into the coffee-pot.

"How you come back here, Aunt Cybele?"

"Me an' Brudder Satun bought in at de sale by Marse Rumford, when he bought de house, arter you lef'. How you come yourse'f?" in her turn, inquired Cybele.

"Promiscuous," replied Venus, who thereupon, while she laid the cloth, related her own adventures in the ship. During this recital she was careful not to betray Astrea's real position in society, but spoke of her only as she appeared. Venus thought the story of Astrea's identity with Mrs. Fulke Greville had better be told first by the lady herself to the planter.

When the coffee, the hoe cakes, and the bacon were placed upon the table, and Cybele and Saturn were about to seat themselves, and only waited in civility for the stranger, Venus, with a delicacy not uncommon to her humble race, said:

"Miss Zora is too tired to sit up at the table;" and taking up a cup of coffee and a plate of biscuits, she carried them, and sat them upon the broad window-sill beside Astrea, and in a low voice implored her to eat and drink.

Astrea thanked her and complied.

When all had finished supper, Cybele said:



“Now, Zora, gal, I show ye yer room.”

Glad of the prospect of being alone, Astrea arose to follow her fat conductor. Venus took the responsibility of being one of the party.

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## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE BRIGHT SPECTRE.

Can this be death?—There's bloom upon her cheek—  
But now I see it is no living hue,  
But a strange hectic—like the unnatural red  
Which autumn plants upon the perished leaf.  
It is a spirit! Oh! that I should dread  
To look upon it now!—Speak to me  
I have so much endured—so much endure—  
Look on me! the grave hath not changed thee more  
Than I am changed. We were not made  
To torture thus each other. Speak to me!—*Byron.*

THEY crossed the yard again, and entered the back door of the house, and passed into a back room on the left-hand side.

For the understanding of the scenes that followed, it is necessary that this room should be described.

First, it had no fireplace; but, directly opposite the door by which they entered, were two long windows, opening upon the end of the piazza; on the left hand, two similar windows, opening upon the back piazza; on the right hand was another door, connecting with the adjoining front room. The floor was covered with a straw matting; the windows shaded by straw blinds; between the two end windows stood the head of the bedstead, draped with white dimity; between the two back windows stood a toilet-table, similarly draped; a washstand stood in the corner between the two doors; straw-bottomed chairs filled up the spaces between the other furniture along the walls.

“Dis wery pleasant room in de summer season,” said Cybele, setting the candle down upon the dressing table.



"It seems very insecure; it is upon the ground floor, and all the windows open upon the piazza," faltered Astrea.

"Yes, honey; but it safe enough of 'trusion from outsider for *dat* matter; 'cause, you see, ole Marse, he sleep in de nex' front room, and neber has less 'an two 'volvers un-erneaf of his head, which everybody knows it, an' de t'ieves keep 'way from prowlin' 'roun' here."

"I wish I could sleep somewhere else—up-stairs in the attic; anywhere, so it was a safe place."

"Lor', chile, dere's nuffin 'tall 'cept 'tis rats up in de attics! 'sides which, dis allers was de housekeeper's room, an' allers will be long as ole marse libs; 'cause dere's no law here 'cept 'tis his will, an' dat's iron."

"Who was my unfortunate predecessor here?"

"What you say, honey?"

"Who was the last occupant of this room?"

"Look yer' chile', ef you speaks to me, speak English, and not Indian; 'cause I don't know a word of it. I don't know no more what you mean by 'free-de-session' nor 'ox-enpant' dan de man in de moon."

"Who was the last housekeeper?" said Astrea, patiently amending her phraseology.

"Oh! now you talks! Lulu, honey; poor Lulu; she come here wid dis marse when he bought dis house; but when she come, she had two bright red spots on her cheeks—brighter dan de crimson roses; de death-fire spots we calls 'em; an' she pined away an' died."

"Poor thing!"

"Now, chile, good-night. I reckon you's tired, an' I knows *I* is; an' den you's got to get up in de mornin' to pour out ole marser's coffee fur him. Wonder he scuses you from doin' of it to-night; but I reckon he thinks you tired. Come, Wenus."

"But cannot Venus remain with me? I am afraid to sleep here alone," pleaded Astrea.

"Honey, it's jes 'bout as much as my head's worf to go



contrary-wise to dis marser's orders. Wenus got to sleep long o' me. You fasten up all your doors an' windows, an' you'll be safe. Dere's de dogs outside an' de ole marse an' his 'volvers inside; so what you 'fraid of? Come 'long, Wenus," said Cybele.

Astrea shuddered, and would have made another appeal, only that the old woman had already left. Venus stepped back to whisper in the young captive's ear:

"'Less you can fasten yourse'f in berry safe, you set up all night in your clothes."

"I will do so, Venus."

"An' put your trust in de Lord."

"It is my only hope."

"Good-night, honey."

"Good-night, good friend."

"Wenus, you gwine stop dere all night?" called the voice of Cybele from the hall.

"No, I'm a-coming," said the girl, hurrying out of the room.

Astrea was alone.

Her first care was to examine the fastenings of her window-shutters; she found them all fast indeed—so fast that she herself could not open them.

She next went to the door communicating with the adjoining front room; this she found also fast—locked on the other side.

She next tried the door opening into the passage; and to her astonishment and dismay, she discovered that also to be locked on the outer side.

She looked around in despair for some means of securing herself against intrusion; but found none. There were no bolts to the doors, which also opened *from* the room, so that she could not even barricade them with the furniture.

She could neither escape from the room, nor secure herself within it.

She was a close prisoner at the hourly mercy of her jailer.



She sank down in a chair overwhelmed with terror.

But she still possessed the little poniard—still had the means of escape through death; and, thus far, held her fate in her own hands. Her courage rose. She took the little weapon from her bosom, and drew it from its silver case and felt the point, and found it very sharp.

“I will not use it while there is a chance of other escape; I will not use it except in extremity—such extremity as must make even suicide a duty—and then! where should I strike with the greatest certainty of instant success? It is well to think of that beforehand. The chest is too well defended; my hand might fail of reaching a vital organ, where failure would be eternal ruin! Where shall I strike then? Ah, here! this is tender! this is easily accessible! Only an instant’s firmness will be needed to strike a mortal blow here!” she said, placing the sharp point of the little poniard against the jugular vein of her throat.

Then, without sheathing it again, she held it in her hand so as to be ready for use at a moment’s warning, and settled herself in her chair to watch out the night. She closed her eyes and clasped her hands to offer up her evening worship. In it she prayed to be saved not only from utter ruin, but from the necessity of using the deadly weapon in her hand. She prayed to be restored in peace and innocence to her friends.

She ceased. And whether sleep like a blessing from heaven descended upon her troubled mind, and she dreamed what seemed to follow; or whether it were a vision or a reality, she herself could not have told. But gradually the room was filled with a soft, bright radiance that, filtrating through her closed eyelids, caused her to open her eyes.

And then she saw that this radiance came from a part of the wall to the right of the door opening into the passage. It was about the height and size and shape of a human being; and where the heart should have been, there was an intense, dazzling light, like a sun, that sent its rays to the outlines



of the form, and through that, lighted up the whole room. The effect of that blazing heart in that form of vapor, was like that of a brilliant gas jet in a ground glass shade.

While Astrea, spell-bound, gazed in awe but not in terror upon this apparition, she noticed in the midst of the blinding light of the blazing heart, a black speck like the spots seen upon the sun.

And while still she gazed, this shape of air became condensed, its outlines grew defined, and it gradually assumed the form of a woman young and beautiful, but overshadowed with what seemed an infinite woe. She was arrayed in flowing white garments, that diffused soft light and aromatic perfume around her; but the portion of her robe that covered the heart, was darkened by a large foul blot, that sent forth a deadly stream of vapor, mingling with and darkening the light, and poisoning the aroma of her presence. Her long black hair was crowned with stars, but the central one was gone—apparently burned away, for its place was filled with what seemed a shapeless, charred mass. Her large, dark eyes were full of eternal sorrow. Her left hand pointed to the spot upon her garments; while her right was extended in warning toward the mortal before her.

Astrea had no power to move, nor to withdraw her gaze, even when this supernatural visitant advanced straight toward her, and stood before her, silent and motionless.

For a moment the mortal and the immortal gazed into each other's eyes, and then Astrea felt the influence of an irresistible power, compelling her against her will and against her terrors to address the presence:

“Spirit! speak! what would you have with me?”

Another minute passed, and then Astrea heard a voice that did not seem to proceed from those mute and mournful lips; but rather to sound inwardly through the depths of her own spirit. The mystic voice said:

“You see the lost star from my crown—the foul blot on



my robe! Till the first is restored and the second is effaced—too foul for heaven, too pure for hell—I wander homeless through the immensity of space! Would you avoid my fate? Flee from this accursed house! flee from it to death!”

Even during the speaking of these solemn words, the apparition slowly lowered its arm, receded to the wall, grew fainter in outline until nothing was left but the blazing heart with its black spot, and the form of air like a cloud around it.

Another moment and this too was gone, the room was no longer bathed in radiance, and Astrea was alone and transfixed with amazement.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### ASTREA'S PERIL.

Oh! I have passed a miserable night,  
So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights,  
That as I am a Christian faithful soul,  
I would not spend another such a night,  
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days,  
So full of dismal terror was the time.—*Shakespeare.*

TOWARD morning Astrea, exhausted by long watching, fell into a fitful slumber, from which at first she every instant started with a shudder; at length, however, this slumber deepened into a sleep so profound, that the captive lost all consciousness of surrounding objects until she was aroused by a loud knocking at her door.

She sprang up in a great panic and gazed wildly around her, not recollecting where she was. She must have slept for some hours, for when she had lost consciousness the room had been in perfect darkness. It was now as light as broad day streaming through the green bars of four pair of Venetian shutters could make it.



The knocking continued, louder than at first, and was now accompanied by a voice calling out :

"Zora, chile ! Zora, honey ! wake up ! My goodness gracious alive, how soun' you do sleep, to be sure ! Zora, honey ! Zora, chile !"

"Yes ! well, who is there ?" exclaimed Astrea, rubbing her forehead, and turning round and round in a very confused memory of her situation.

"It's me, honey ! me, chile ! ole Aunt Cybele. Laws-a-messy on top o' my poor ole black soul, you must a' been a-sleepin' like de seven sleeper ! You aint up yet, an' here's breakfas' ready, an' old marse a-waitin' for you to come an' pour out his coffee."

Full memory in all its horrors now returned to the unhappy captive, and with a sigh, partly of relief that the night of terror had passed away without the dreaded catastrophe, and partly of fear for the possible events of the day, Astrea walked toward the door to open it. But suddenly reflecting that the door was secured on the other side only, she said :

"You can come in, the door is not fastened on this side."

Cybele turned the latch and entered the room, exclaiming, as soon as she saw Astrea :

"Why, chile, you dressed a'ready ? Dat right ! I thought by you not answering as how you was asleep. Why 'n you answer when I call you ?"

"I *was* asleep. I sat up in my clothes and watched all night. I was afraid to go to bed because I was locked in, and had no means of locking any one out. I fell asleep near morning, and slept till you woke me. But why did you lock me in ?"

"Me lock you in !" exclaimed Cybele, in astonishment. "Why, chile, it would a-been as much as my woolly ole head was worf, to lock you in ! Dat was ole marse's doin's. Soon as ebber me an' Wenus come out'n your room las'



night, an' while we went to fasten de windows in de hall, ole marse he come soft out'n his room an' turns de key ob your door an' puts it in his pocket. Dis mornin,' soon as ebber he was dressed, he come an' unlock it again. I seen him doin' of it while I was a-settin' of de table, wid de dinin'-room door open."

"Why did he do that?" exclaimed Astrea, forgetting her position, and flushing with indignation.

Now the uncultivated negro has naturally the very same manner of expressing inexpressible things as the cultivated French—with a significant shrug of the shoulders. Cybele drew hers up in the most exaggerated manner, as she answered :

"Laws, honey, when anybody buy perty bird an' pay high price, dey puts it in de cage an' fastens de door, fear of it flying away—leastways till it gets *tame* you know."

An indignant exclamation arose to the captive's lips, but she prudently suppressed it.

"And now, honey, do pray for goodness sake make haste, an' come an' pour out ole marse's coffee 'fore he loses of his temper," said Cybele, impatiently.

Astrea bathed her face and smoothed her hair and settled the folds of her dress and gravely announced herself ready to go.

"Come along, den, I show you de dinin' room where ole marse takes all his meals," said Cybele, leading the way just across the passage to a back room directly opposite to that of Astrea.

It was furnished in simple summer style, with straw matting on the floor, straw blinds at the four windows, and straw-bottomed chairs and settees ranged around the room. There was, besides, a sideboard against the back wall between the windows. A small round table, covered with a white damask cloth that hung to the floor, and adorned with a breakfast service of burnished silver, stood in the middle of the room. Upon it lay plates of light biscuits



and cakes, potted meats and fish, fresh fruit, and all the luxuries of a summer breakfast. There was a cover laid and a chair placed but for one.

Astrea was expected to stand in the presence of her master. And this she much preferred to the hated intimacy implied in sitting at the table with him. Any, even the most humble position, being much higher in her view than the humiliation of such an equality with him.

Cybele went out and brought in the hissing silver urn and put it on the table, and then went and summoned her master, who was walking up and down taking the morning air in the front piazza.

Rumford came in radiant and smiling, and looking cool and healthy in his morning suit of white holland and his broad-brimmed straw hat. He threw his hat upon a settee and dropped into his seat at the table, saying gayly:

"Well, my girl, got over your sulks yet? You see I have given you time."

Astrea bowed slowly with a grave dignity, but without other reply.

"If that means yes, I'm deuced glad to hear it! Come, give me a cup of coffee. I like a good deal of sugar and cream in it too," said Rumford, turning the contents of a whole jar of potted venison into his plate and helping himself to a biscuit.

Astrea gravely poured out the cup of coffee according to his directions, and placed it beside his plate. Then as gravely she resumed her stand at the head of the table.

"Bless my soul alive, girl! you are as solemn as an owl," said the planter, as he took up his coffee.

"Mr. Rumford—," began Astrea, with the serious dignity that had marked her whole manner since falling into the power of this man; but before she could add another word he interrupted her with the remark:

"My servants usually call me 'Master;' my friends only say 'Mr. Rumford;' while my intimates term me 'Barnabas.'"



"I thank you, sir, for the information, although it cannot interest me much."

"I say, girl, where did you pick up your fine lady phrases?"

"I am glad you perceive that I possess them, sir. I was educated at a school for young ladies in the Green Mountains, if it concerns you to know; as I think it may."

"And as I should think it *did*," replied the man, emptying a jar of Dumfries Orange marmalade into his plate."

"Mr. Rumford, I was about to ask you to give me an interview this morning, that need not detain you more than twenty minutes."

"You shall have it, my girl, directly after breakfast! You might have it now, only that I cannot eat and talk, or even eat and listen with advantage, at the same time," said the planter, handing his cup for a second supply of coffee.

Astrea filled and returned it in silence.

The planter was a gourmand, and so the breakfast seemed interminable. At length, however, it was finished, and the man arose and touched the bell, summoning Cybele to clear away the table. Then beckoning Astrea to follow, he opened the communicating door leading from the dining-room into the adjoining front parlor, which was a pleasant apartment, furnished like the others with straw matting, straw window blinds, and straw-bottomed chairs and settees, and adorned with pictures, statuettes, vases, and books.

"Now then, my girl, what is it?" inquired Rumford, throwing himself at ease upon a settee that stood between the two front windows.

Astrea, standing before him, pondered for a moment how best to open the subject.

Rumford misunderstood her hesitation, and said:

"Some one you have left behind, I suppose, whom you wish me to purchase and bring out here! Some old mother, or young sister, or little child, perhaps, without whom you cannot make yourself contented! Well! speak out, let us



know which it is, and as I am a good-natured fellow, who knows, if you please me, but that I shall satisfy you!"

"Sir, you are mistaken. My request for an interview with you concerned none of those things which you have mentioned. What I have to say is not only of vital importance to myself, but it may be of advantage to you!"

"What is it, then, in the deuse's name, my girl?"

"Sir, it is this—that I have been greatly wronged, and you have been much deceived, by the man who pretended to sell me to you! I should have told you so upon the deck of the ship before the nefarious sale was effected, but for two reasons—in the first place, if I had ventured to speak, I should have been contradicted, brow-beaten, and silenced, while you yourself might have believed the false captain instead of me, or else, believing me might have declined the purchase, and left me still in the clutches of that ruthless man, when I was most anxious to leave the ship. These considerations determined me to continue silent, until I should be safe out of the ship, and then to speak—appealing to your sense of justice and humanity, and feeling sure, besides, that if you had suffered loss by the nefarious transaction to which my own silence seemed to make me a consenting party, my friends, who are wealthy, would recompense you tenfold."

"What-in-the-name-of-sense *are* you driving at, my good girl? You talk like an orator; but I'm dashed if I can understand you!" said the man, with his fat eyes protruding in astonishment.

"Sir," replied Astrea, with grave and gentle dignity, "I am by education, habit, and position a lady. I am the adopted daughter of Captain William Fuljoy, of Fuljoy's Island, and the wife of Colonel Fulke Greville, of the United States Army. On my bridal eve, I was drugged and abducted by this buccaneer and his piratical crew. I was brought to the mouth of the Mississippi river, and sold to yourself—not, I fancy, for the sake of the money



received from you, when you believed that you were paying for a mulatto girl, but for some much deeper motive, of which I can only form the vaguest conjecture. Let that pass. I have now told you who and what I am, and I have now only to add, that if you will immediately write to my friends, and while waiting for an answer from them, cause me to be treated with the consideration due to my position, my friends, when they answer you, which they will do by coming in person to fetch me, will be sure to compensate you tenfold for any loss you have suffered on my account."

Astrea spoke these words with a quiet strength of faith that must have forced conviction of its truth upon the mind of Rumford, had he not been fore-armed by falsehood against its power.

"So, then, this is the breaking out of the monomania against which I was warned by Merrick," he muttered to himself; and then, as if to draw his captive out, he said:

"This is a curious story you tell me; I would like to hear all the particulars."

"I will give them to you, sir, as far as I can remember them; for, as I said before, some of these events took place while I was under the influence of some powerful drug."

"Humph! that must have been when she had the brain fever," muttered the man, as before. Then he motioned to her to go on.

And Astrea gave him the details of her abduction as far as they were known to herself.

"An interesting story," said Rumford. "But now, my good girl, I want you to understand, that upon the subject of this fancied abduction of yours you are very decidedly cracked!"

"Sir! sir! no, I am not! The wicked captain has told you so to blind you against the truth! If you are really in doubt about the matter, write to my friends; a month will bring you the answer—or rather bring you *them* in person. Write, I entreat you."



"Why, so I would, my girl, if I had the slightest doubt of the event; but to trouble a highly respectable family, who are perfect strangers to me, with the crazy fancies of one of my own people, is rather preposterous! not to say insulting to them."

"Then *I* will write! Indeed I should have proposed to do so myself at first! I will write to-day!"

"Not if *I* know it! Come, Zora, you imagine yourself Mrs. Fulke Greville! Did you ever happen to see Mrs. Fulke Greville?"

"Every time I have looked in the glass since my marriage, sir."

"Then, if you really ever *did* see Mrs. Fulke Greville, you saw a radiant blonde, with snowy skin, and sapphire eyes, and golden hair—a cold beauty, not half so charming as my warm, rich, ripe Zora, though she is but a mulatto!"

"Oh, sir! you are deceived! I am indeed that Mrs. Greville of whom you speak! Oh, did I not tell you that they must have stained my skin, and dyed my hair and eyebrows to make me seem what I am not! Do but write, or permit me to write to my friends to come here and identify me! My dear husband, my kind old guardian would never be deceived by this external discoloration of my hair and skin!" implored Astrea, clasping her hands and raising her eyes in impassioned supplication to the face of her purchaser.

"Bosh, girl! I tell you you're mad! you're no more Mrs. Fulke Greville than you're Mrs. Pius IX.! Absurd! When I was in Washington, last winter, I saw that lady in public places very often. If ever two females were the perfect antipodes of each other in personal appearance, they were like Mrs. Greville and yourself! She, a tall, full-formed, radiant blonde! You, a little midge of a mulatto!"

"Oh! I know, that besides my discolored skin and dyed hair, I have wasted away and grown very thin; and my dress is scant, where it was once ample, full, and flowing.



These are the externals that deceive you. Ah! perhaps they would deceive any one except my own friends, who have known me from childhood. Let me write to them. They will know my handwriting and my style; and then they will hasten here and recognize me, even through all these disguises!" pleaded the captive, with clasped hands and strained eyes.

"Bosh! it is the full of the moon and a fit of lunacy! Have you any thing more to say to me?" said the man, filling his pipe and lighting it with a match.

"Yes, one more question to set you to thinking. I have told you who I am; that I am, by education, habit, and position a young lady. I would now ask you, Mr. Rumford, whether you think my appearance, manners, and language are those of a—servant?"

"Humph!" grunted the master, taking the pipe from his lips and reflecting; "not of an ordinary one, I grant you. But Merrick prepared me for all that. He told me you could sing like an angel, and dance like a fairy, and talk like the deuse. You can do that last I now perceive!" And so saying the man replaced his pipe.

"May I ask you then, sir," inquired Astrea, ironically, "how Merrick—since that was his name—explained the phenomena of a mulatto being able to do all these things?"

"Oh! certainly, by all means. While we were over the wine, he told me that you were the child of a wealthy planter and his favorite servant. That your father sent you, when you were but seven years old, to a Northern school, where he passed you off as a white girl and his ward. He intended to bring you up as a young lady, and so he left you at that school for ten years, and then brought you home. He further intended to set you free; but unfortunately he died suddenly, and so you shared the fate of his other people and was sold. You were bought by a captain of a steamboat first, where you happened to have to wait on a beautiful young bride, making her wedding tour. You



took your reverse so much to heart as to get a brain fever, which has left you with this monomania. Poor girl! It was really a terrible reverse. But cheer up; be a good girl; and you shall live easy, and have plenty of fine clothes to wear. And when I die I will leave you free. So you see, things are not so bad as they threatened to be; they never are in this world. Come, now—give us a kiss——What the deuse do you want, you meddlesome old fool, poking your stupid head in here?”

This last question was put to old Cybele, who at this moment appeared at the door, from the dining-room.

“Ole Marse,” answered the woman, doggedly, “’taint offen as I speaks my own mine; but when I does *I does*, and Ole Nick hisself shan’t ’vent me of doing it!”

“I have no time to bestow upon you now; go about your business!”

“Shan’t do it! Nebber went about my business when I didn’t choose to go, to please my ole ole marse, ’taint like as I’ll do it now to please my new ole marse!”

“Leave the room, I say, or I’ll——” exclaimed the man, advancing upon her.

“*What?* You’ll *what* now? Not hit me, ’cause I’s too ole; an’ not sell me, ’cause nobody ’ll buy me; so what’ll you do?”

“Listen to you, I suppose,” said Rumford, suddenly changing his mood, and half laughing at the absurdity of being defied by a miserable old woman.

“Well, den, dis what I gwine to say to you *good*. You has no ’sideration for oder people’s feelin’s. You done had your own good, warm breakfas’, and now you’s full, you don’t care a brass button who goes empty! Dat’s jes *you*. Now how you ’spect dat dere gal gwine to lib widout eatin’? And here you keepin’ of her widout her breakfas’ all dis time!”

“It is her own fault!” answered Rumford. “Go, Zora, and get your breakfast. Then come back to me again.”



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

## ASTREA'S FLIGHT.

On what strange grounds we build our hopes and fears  
 Our lives are all a mist, and in the dark  
 Our fortunes meet us.  
 If fate be not, then what can we foresee?  
 And how can we avoid it, if it be?  
 If by free will in our own path we move,  
 How are we bounded by decrees above?  
 Whether we drive, or whether we are driven,  
 If ill, 'tis ours; if good, the act of Heaven.—*Dryden.*

GLAD to escape from his presence, Astrea followed her sable guide to the dining-room, closing the communicating door.

"Here, chile, you might's well eat here; 'cause Wenus say how you's allus been used to libin putty much in de house along o' de white people, an' so it go hard wid you to eat in de kitchen; which 'pears to me queer, too; 'cause, you see, *I* shouldn't feel free an' easy eatin' in de house," said the kind old creature, placing a hot cup of coffee for the captive.

"Oh, Aunt Cybele! come here, I want to whisper to you," said Astrea, in a low voice, beckoning the women.

Cybele approached and bent down her head to listen.

"Oh, Cybele! I have left friends at home that I wish to write to! Can you procure me pen and ink and paper to write to them?"

"Ole marse got some in his scratchetary. I can go ask him for some."

"No, no, no! he does not want me to write home; he would not let you have it for me; but can you not get me some somewhere else?"

"Why law, chile, if ole marse 'jects to your writing it jes as much as my poor ole woolly head is worf to help you to do it in any way!"

"You are not afraid of your master! You defied him just now!"



"Law, chile, I knows jes how far I can go wid ole marse! I can *say* putty much what I please to him; but I can't *do* what I please. Ole marse aint a bad-tempered man in de main! But when he *do* get on de high horse—law! but he makes people clar' out'n his way! 'cause, you see, *he* jes leib kill you as look at you. I wonners, 'deed I does, as he's lib to dis hour ob de day widout killin' somebody!"

"And you will not assist me?"

"Can't, honey!"

"Then heaven will!" said Astrea, taking her resolution.

She knew that at night she would be again locked in her chamber, from which escape would be impracticable.

Therefore she must try to elude observation, and go by day.

She knew also that the approaching interview with her purchaser would be full of peril.

And therefore the attempt must be made at once.

The supernatural vision or dream had warned her to fly from the accursed house. And upon that and every other account she would do so.

Yes! she must fly from the house, from danger, from dishonor; but—whither should she fly?—whither, in a country where every door would be closed against the fugitive, and every constable put upon her track?

To death, if necessary! This was what the vision had said! If she could once escape to the cypress swamp, she might defy re-capture, and even if she perished by starvation, it would be better than to be driven to the act of suicide, as she should be by remaining in this house. To the shades of the cypress swamp then she resolved to try to make her escape.

She would have liked to write a few lines to her friends at home, and leave the letter for Cybele to put in the post-office; but this the fears of the old woman rendered impossible.

As she mechanically sipped her coffee, her mind reverted



again to the supernatural visitant or dream of the night, and she connected it with the thought of her predecessor in this house, of whose fate she had heard the preceding evening, and she inquired:

“Cybele, what sort of looking person was that poor Lulu of whom you spoke to me last night?”

“Laws, chile, let’s see!—I aint good at ’scribin’. Poor gal! She was tall, slim, delicy, wid long black hair fallin’ down below her wais’; an’ great black eyes wid de most mournfullest look into dem as ebber you see! She look jes as if she had some eberlastin’ great sorrow as nothin’ on this earth, nor yet in heaben, could eber, eber comfort her again! Dat her! An’ so she pine away an’ die!” whispered the old woman, mysteriously.

Astrea recognized with a superstitious thrill the portrait of her nocturnal visitor.

“An’ I don’t want to scare you, honey, but dey do say, how she *walks*!”

“Walks?” echoed the captive.

“Yes, honey; dey do say ole marse hisse’f can’t sleep quiet in his *bed*, because *she* don’t rest quiet in her *grave*! Dey say how anybody a-listenin’ can hear him hallo out in de middle o’ de night for de fear dat is on him. You see, honey, I don’t know nuffin ’bout it. It may be nuffin ’tall but his guilty conscience for aughts *I* know!” whispered the old woman.

“But *who* says these things?” inquired Astrea, in a tone of voice from which she could not banish the expression of awe.

“Hush, honey; Dinah, as was the housemaid ’fore Wenus come, she was de fus’. An’ when ole marse heard dat, he jes turn roun’ an’ sold her to a trader. Den odder people said de same; eben visitors as stopt in de house all night. But *I* say it’s de effects ob conscience.”

“Well,” said Astrea, “such an explanation of his wakeful nights might be satisfactory.”



"But see here, honey, why'n you eat your breakfas'? You seem jes like anybody in a dream," said Cybele, herself just waking up to the perception that Astrea sat there with the food untouched before her.

Astrea, now recollecting that she would need all her strength for her escape, forced herself to swallow a little coffee and bread, and then quietly arose from the table and walked out of the back door, as though she was going into the kitchen. Then, with a sudden impulse, she turned back and got into her own room. The key was still on the outside of the lock. She turned the guard of the keyhole down on the inside, so that no one could look through it from without. Then catching up and concealing the bonnet that Venus had given her, she came out of the door and looked up and down the passage.

No one was on the watch.

She then closed and softly locked the door and withdrew the key, and stooped to look through the keyhole. It was dark.

"They will think that I have locked myself in, and perhaps gone to sleep, and that will gain time," she said to herself, as once more she passed the back door out into the back yard, as if going into the kitchen. The yard was thickly shaded with trees. There was no one visible in it. She passed to the right of the kitchen building into a kitchen garden, where she found old Saturn busy among the pea-vines.

"Good mornin', Miss Zora! How you do dis mornin', miss?" inquired the old man, straightening himself up.

"I am well, I thank you, Saturn," she replied, as her heart sank at being thus discovered.

"Where you gwine dis mornin'," next asked the old man, bent on conversation.

"Don't you see? I am looking at your garden. Where are your strawberry beds?" she asked, anxious to escape.

"Right down dere, honey; on de sunny side o' de slope,



at de bottom o' de garden," said Saturn, pointing the way.

With a nod and a forced smile Astrea went on. It may be well supposed that she did not stop to pluck the luscious fruit. When she had got to the bottom of the slope, she sought for some back gate that might lead out of the garden. The fence was high and close, and she could not see what was beyond it; but she believed the fields to be there, and the road not far off. At length she discovered, not a back, but a *side* gate. To her joy, it was unfastened. She opened it, passed through, and — found herself in the poultry yard, where Venus stood with a basket of grain in her hand, from which she was feeding a flock of chickens that were fluttering around her.

At sight of the young lady, down went the basket of corn, scattering its contents lavishly among the delighted fowls, who hastened to gobble it up while Venus ran to the side of Astrea, exclaiming, breathlessly:

"Honey, was you disturbe' las' night? Is you safe dis mornin'?"

"Thank heaven, I am safe! But oh, Venus, my safety is momentarily endangered. I have not now a moment to stop to talk with you, I must escape; so——"

"'Scape!" exclaimed the woman, with her mouth and eyes wide open with astonishment. 'Scape where, chile?"

"To the cypress swamp! to death! to any thing but the fate from which I fly."

"'Twill be deaf, den. How you get out'n de house wid-out bein' stopped?"

Astrea rapidly and breathlessly told her; adding:

"They think that I have locked myself in my room. That will give me some little time to reach the cypress swamp, and once there, I can lose myself in its innermost recesses. Now tell me, and oh! quickly, how I can best reach that swamp. You know the country, I suppose, having lived here all your life?"



"Yes, honey; but don't you go!" pleaded the woman, in whose thought, exposure to almost certain death was the very greatest evil one could encounter, except death itself.

"Venus, understand me. I must and will escape from this house, from this danger that threatens me, no matter what else I meet in life or death! Listen farther. If I escape to the cypress swamp there is a chance of life for me. I *may* be found by some one who will believe my story and take my part. If I remain here my death is certain. For look here, Venus—before that man, who is even now waiting impatiently for me to go to him, shall so much as lay his hand on me—*I will do this!*" and suddenly flashing out her poniard, she placed its glittering point against her throat.

"Ar-r-r-r-r!" screeched Venus, shutting her eyes, and opening her mouth to its widest extent.

"Hush! you will alarm the plantation!" said Astrea, in a low, peremptory tone, as she sheathed the poniard. "And now, if you wish to save my life as well as my honor, show me the shortest way to reach the cypress swamp."

"Oh! Oh, dear! Oh, Lor'! I neber could 'bide cole steel an' deadly weapons—nebber! An' de sight o' blood would finish me in two minutes! Nebber gib me sich anoder scare as long as eber you lib, chile, less you want to see me drap down dead afore you!" sobbed Venus, all in a tremble.

"Show me the way then—or else——" said Astrea, raising the poniard significantly.

"Yes, yes, yes! I gwine to!" gasped Venus, in an accession of terror, seizing the hand of Astrea, and hurrying her on to a gate letting out from the poultry yard.

This gate opened upon a worn-out and abandoned field, now grown sparsely up with high weeds and hardy shrubs, such as could find nourishment in its exhausted soil. A narrow, disused, grass-grown path ran through this field.

"Dere, you see dis here path? Follow it t'rough dis



fiel' till you come to de wild fig trees; den t'rough dem till you come to de magnolia grove; den t'rough dat till you come to de plains—den dere isn't no path, but you can see de Cypress Swamp straight afore you, right agin' de sky, and not more'n half a mile off."

"Thank you, Venus; and now one request more! Pray do not mention that you have seen me unless you are questioned."

"Who—me? Not if I knows it! Who you think wants dere head bit off for lettin' of you go? not Wenus! I tell you, honey! I's 'tween two fires wid you an' ole marse! You t'reaten to kill yourself if I don't let you go; an' he be sure to kill me if he fine out I did let you go! No, chile; I aint gwine to say nuffin 'tall. I gwine keep a still tongue in my head, in dis yere ticklish business. An' now ef you will go, you'd better go 'long! I gwine lock dis here gate arter you, an' t'row away de key," said Venus.

"Thank you again, and good-by!" said Astrea, as she disappeared through the gate.

Venus locked it after her, and threw the key over the fence into the high weeds, where it must have been hopelessly lost.

"Dere now! Uncle Satan get de blame o' losin' dat key! 'cause it's his business to keep dat gate locked an' dat key safe! which, if he'd a done his duty, dis gal nebber could o' bullied me into lettin' o' her t'rough! 'cause why? why, 'cause I couldn't 'a' done it widouten de key! Oh! but aint she a lamb neider? When she t'reaten me wid dat little p'inard, her eyes flash sparks o' fire! Who'd a thought it o' her, to see her so gentle, most times? But lors! so is a wild cat—de softes', gentles', purrin'est creetur' dat ebber was till you makes it mad! Den take care o' yourse'f, will you! All o' suddint it's nuffin but fangs an' claws an' tail, all in a blaze o' spittin' fire! Ole marse better look out for hisse'f an' let *she* alone! 'deed had *he*! He better take a she-tigress for a sweetheart afore *she*! She jes' soon



p'inard him as look at him, an' a heap sooner, too! Now what I gwine to say ef dey ax me any questions? Lie like de debbil, I s'pose, wid de risk o' bein' found out, to make my case worse! Well, Venus, I wishes you well out'n dis scrape!" said Venus to herself, as she left the poultry-yard, and went into the house to do the chamber work.

Cybele was still in the dining-room, standing at the head of the table, washing up the breakfast service. She came out and spoke to Venus, inquiring:

"See any t'ing o' Zora, dis mornin'?"

"Dere! I know dat gwine to be de berry first question! Why, where is she?" said the woman, who was not quite prepared with her falsehood.

"She went out here 'bout an hour ago, an' she aint in de kitchen, nor likewise in de yard; t'ought as how you an' she were 'quainted long of each oder, you might 'a' seen somefin of her."

"How I gwine see her an' she in de house an' I outside? Who want her?"

"I do!" said the angry voice of Mr. Rumford, as he walked into the room. "I had something to say to her, and I ordered her to come to me directly after she had finished her breakfast. She has not done so! She has kept me waiting for nearly two hours! You were her companion! Where is the woman! Tell me at once!"

"Oh, lors! it's a comin'!" said the trembling girl to herself.

"Answer, woman!"

"Yes, sir! I is a gwine to, sir! 'deed I is!" said Venus, twisting her apron, withou the remotest idea of what she should say.

"Then why the deuse *don't* you? Don't you understand the question? Where is your companion? Where is Zora?" thundered the roused man.

"Oh, lor', sir! oh, lor', sir! she's—she's——"



“WHERE?”

“Locked herse’f up in her own room to go to sleep, sir?” cried Venus, discharging this lie with the suddenness of a bullet.

Rumford dropped the arm of Venus, and his rage subsided into a good-humored surprise, as he said slowly:

“Well, upon my word! this is one of the coolest proceedings I ever heard of! I order a girl to come to my presence directly after breakfast, and instead of coming, she goes calmly off and locks herself up in her own room to go to sleep! I like that!”

“But, marse,” said Venus, who, now that the fountain of falsehood was unsealed, lied most fluently—“Zora was mos’ dead for sleep, sir! ’deed she was! ’cause she didn’t sleep all las’ night long o’ de fright she got a-bein’ by herse’f!”

“Fright?”

“Yes, marse! You see she allus use to have me in her room, an’ she ’fraid to sleep by herse’f at night. An’ so she couldn’t sleep! An’ so dis mornin’ she dead for sleep! An’ ebber since her long sickness she’s subject to a flutteration ob de heart, which, if she doesn’t get her good sleep, it comes on.”

“Humph! that is very bad! Merrick told me nothing of that,” said Rumford, shaking his head with an air of dissatisfaction.

“Hi, marse, you t’ink any trader gwine to run down an’ misparage his own goods? But you needn’t be no ways oneasy ’bout Zora, if you on’y lets her sleep de gran’ roun’s.”

“The grand rounds? What the deuse are they?” asked the planter, raising his eyebrows.

“Why, marse, from one hour of de ebenin’ to de ’spondin’ hour ob de mornin’; or failin’ ob dat, as it failed las’ night, from one hour ob de mornin’ to de ’spondin’ hour of de ebenin’. So as she go to sleep dis mornin’ at nine o’clock don’t let anybody wake her up till nine o’clock dis ebenin’. Dat will be twelve hours at a stretch.”



"Ha, ha, ha! and that is what you call sleeping the grand rounds? Well, it is well that no more of my people possess a constitutional necessity for sleeping the grand rounds! Well, as it is her first day in her new home, we will let her sleep! It will be time enough for me to give her a lecture on obedience to my orders when she wakes!" laughed Rumford, good-humoredly, as he put his everlasting pipe in his mouth, and sauntered out upon the lawn.

"Wenus, dat true?" significantly inquired Cybele, as she put away the breakfast service in the china closet.

"What true?" demanded the non-committing Venus.

"'Bout Zora."

"What 'bout Zora?"

"'Bout her havin' of dat flutteration in de heart, an' be-in' 'blige to sleep de gran' roun's an' dat? Or is it only good for nuffin', triflin' laziness?"

"It's *true*; do you t'ink I tell a false?" demanded Venus, indignantly.

"Oh, no! but I t'ink you looks berry much like *I* do when *I* tells a false, dere!"

"I gwine do ole marse room now!" said Venus, flinging herself angrily out of the dining-room.

The day passed off quietly.

Mr. Rumford dined out with a neighbor, and did not return home until very late. As he always let himself in with a latch-key, his servants were not required to set up for him. At ten o'clock, therefore, Cybele and Venus were engaged in closing up the house when the former said:

"It done struck ten o'clock! an' dat gal aint wake up yet! I t'ink she mus' be sleepin' of de gran's roun's, gran-'er dan ebber!"

"Well, s'pose she is? She's tireded dan ebber!" grumbled Venus, as they locked the last door behind them and retired to the loft above the kitchen where they slept.

Meanwhile, where was Astrea?



## CHAPTER XL.

## THE SEARCH.

The far-sweeping earth shall not shelter,  
Nor the all-embracing sea hide her  
From my search.—*Old Play.*

It was near day when Rumford returned from the dinner party, none the better for the champagne he had consumed. He was one of those whom wine will put to sleep but never deprive of reason. He had sense enough to reach home, put his horse in the stable, let himself in the house, find his way to his chamber, and even blow out the light before tumbling into bed, where he fell into a heavy sleep, which lasted until late the next day.

That morning the household arose early as usual. Cybele and Venus met in the passage between Astrea's chamber and the dining-room.

"Zora up yet?" inquired the oldest of the goddesses.

"No," was the curt reply.

"Den she mus' be sleepin' ob de gran' roun's three times ober! I gwine call her."

"Don't you do no such thing. Ole marse say how she mustn't be sturb till she wake up her own self!" said Venus, in alarm.

"But goodness alibe, chile, de gal sleep herself to deaf!"

"Not she! I knows her ways! It's all along of her flutteration ob de heart! You go wake her up an' kill her! dat all! an' den see what ole marse gwine say to you!" said Venus, threateningly.

"Berry well, I aint gwine to 'sturb her. Deed for dat matter, since she *has* slept so long, I has got a curiosity to see how long she *will* sleep if lef' alone," answered Cybele, hurrying out into the kitchen to attend to the breakfast.

Venus went into the dining-room to set the table.

According to the strict rules of the house, breakfast was always prepared at the usual hour—eight o'clock. But on



this morning it waited long in vain for the appearance of the master.

At length, some time after eleven o'clock, he came out of his chamber wrapped in his dressing-gown, and looking tired and haggard. He entered the dining-room, threw himself into his arm-chair, and rang for his coffee.

Venus brought in the urn.

"Where is Zora? Has she got through with her—Rip Van Winkle sleep yet?" inquired the planter, with a dash of humor in his tone.

"No, sir," answered Venus, curtly and unexpectedly.

"WHAT!" exclaimed Rumford in astonishment.

"It take her a long time to sleep off one ob dem flutterations ob de——"

"Bosh!" exclaimed Rumford, laughing, jumping up from the table, striding through the passage, and knocking loudly at Astrea's door, while he called out:

"Zora! Zora! Zora! Come, come, my girl! Are you sleeping the last sleep? Or are you, as is most likely, sulking there? You must be hungry by this time at least? Come, come, show yourself!"

And having thundered at the door once more, he returned and seated himself at the table, saying:

"That would awaken her if she was one of the seven sleepers! Pour out my coffee, girl."

It was fully an hour and a half before the gourmand got through with his breakfast and left the table. His first thought was of Astrea.

"Hasn't that girl made her appearance yet?" he inquired of Cybele, who was loitering in the passage.

"No, sir; an' I is feared somefin has happen' Taint no ways natural for anybody to sleep so long as dat," answered Cybele.

"No, it is not! and people with heart disease sometimes die in their sleep," said the planter, going to Astrea's door and knocking and calling loudly.



Of course there was no response from within.

"There *is* something the matter! Get me a crow-bar, and I will force the door," said Rumford, turning pale.

Cybele trotted off, and asked Saturn for the required tool.

The old man was some time rummaging in the wood-shed before he could find it; for old Saturn, with the disorderly habits of his tribe, kept his kindling wood in the tool-house, and left his tools scattered about under the wood-shed.

At length, however, Cybele brought the crow-bar to her master, and the door was forced.

They all entered the room in a body.

There was no one there. The room was empty.

Every one looked into each other's face with astonishment! Even Venus, because she knew the secret perfectly well, opened her mouth and eyes wider than any one else.

The master was the first to find his voice.

"What, in the name of the demons of darkness, is the meaning of this?" he demanded, in a terrible voice, turning from Cybele to Venus.

"'Deed an' 'deed an' 'deed, marse, I doesn't know, sir?" replied Cybele, trembling with affright, although she was speaking the truth.

"An' 'fore all the angels in hebbin, marse, I don't know nuffin nuther!" affirmed Venus, with all the more confidence because she knew she was telling a lie.

"You are both deceiving me! But take care!"

"'Deed an' 'deed, marse, 'fore de Lord, we aint!" exclaimed both in a breath.

"Who saw her last?" demanded the master, in a furious voice.

No one durst answer.

"What was the last *you* saw of her, Cybele?" he thundered, turning to the old woman.

"Lor', marse! soon as ebber she done her breakfas' yes'-day mornin' she went out o' de dinin'-room, an' I t'ought how she was a-going to you 'cordin' to orders, 'cause I



heard you tell her to come myself! An' dat was the berry las' I see of her."

"And you? You saw her after this? You saw her when she said she was going to lie down and sleep?" said the planter, turning abruptly to Venus.

"Yes, marse! yes, sir! I was stan'in' in de back door when she come out'n de dinin'-room, an' open her own room door an' say to me, 'Wenus, I is gwine to lie down an' try to get some sleep.' An' so she shut her own door an' lock it on de inside, an' dat de berry las' I ebber see ob her, 'fore all de angels in heaben!"

It was terrible to look on the white rage of the baffled man. His face was as pale and grim as death itself; his eyes gleamed with a baleful fire; his jaws were locked; and his words came from beneath clenched teeth.

"Call Saturn to me," was his next order.

The old man was summoned and questioned; but could give no satisfaction.

"Her sleep was a sham," said Rumford, between his set teeth. Then turning to Saturn, he said:

"Cause inquiries to be made throughout the plantation for her. Go yourself down to the negro's quarters, and ask there; see Steppins, the overseer, and question him. Say that I will give a hundred dollars to any of my people who will bring me any certain information about her!"

Saturn hurried away to do his errand. The others dispersed upon the same mission. The search began in earnest, and was pursued that whole morning with vigor, but without effect.

Toward evening Rumford once more called Saturn to his presence.

The old man stood bowing before him.

"This girl Zora is very delicate; he has but recently recovered from a severe illness; she has already probably passed one night exposed in the open air; she must not pass another; it might be her death; she must be recovered



by any means and at all hazards; loose the two old bloodhounds, Castor and Pollux, and bring them to this room."

"Oh! marse! You would not hurt a young gal with bloodhounds?" exclaimed the old man.

"Why not? They will not hurt her; they are too well trained; they will only track her and hold her until we come up! and, in one word, it is the only way, or at least the quickest and surest way, of recovering her! Besides, blame you! am I accountable to *you* for my acts?" said Rumford, half laughing, as was his custom when betrayed into any supposed infringement of his own dignity.

The old man went out and did as he was bid, and very soon the passage door was burst open, and two beautiful hounds bounded before Saturn into their master's presence, and jumping upon him, began to cover him with caresses.

"Good dogs! come! come!" said the latter, rising and leading the way into Astrea's room.

Here he looked about in vain for some article of her clothing, but failing to find any, and recollecting besides that she had brought nothing with her except what she wore, he felt quite at a loss, until suddenly thinking of the arm-chair in which, he had learned, she had passed the night, he made the well-trained dogs scent that, and then he started them upon the track with the usual words:

"Good dogs! good dogs! seek her, seek her, then!"

They snuffed about the chair, and then about the room, and finally reaching the door struck the trail; but seemed soon to lose it again in the passage, and again to recover it in the yard. And thus, sometimes at fault, sometimes on the trail, they passed through the yard and the garden and the poultry-yard to the back gate, where it will be remembered that Astrea stood a considerable time talking to Venus.

Here they set up a howl, and as the fence was very low, they soon scrambled over it and set forth in full cry upon the path that she had taken.

Meantime Rumford had mounted a horse that stood



ready saddled to receive him, and had ridden out upon the high road to watch the motions of the dogs.

When he saw them scramble over the back fence of the poultry-yard, and set out in full cry upon the narrow path leading through the old field, he called to his groom to mount and follow him, and put spurs to his horse and dashed after them at full speed, uttering, in a high, encouraging tone, the cries by which a hunter cheers on his hounds to the chase. So they dashed over the fields leading to the cypress swamp.

And meantime where was Astrea?

After she had passed the gate, and heard it shut and locked behind her, she struck into the narrow path leading through the neglected fields toward the grove of wild fig trees. Fear lent her wings until she had cleared the intervening space and reached their friendly shelter.

Then, weary, palpitating, and breathless, she sat down to rest. She could no longer be seen by any chance observer from the house. But yet, in her nervous, frightened, and vigilant state, the flutter of a bird in the foliage, the stir of an insect in the herbage was enough to startle her. Not long, therefore, did she trust herself to repose here; but having waited only to recover breath, arose and hurried forward on her way, which led her through the open country toward a grove of Magnolia trees, where she again ventured to sit down to rest for awhile, and this time with the more confidence, that she calculated herself to be at a considerable distance from the plantation house.

After half an hour's repose, she once more set forth on her way, that now led her through green savannas stretching toward the cypress swamp.

Here the path was lost; but that was of little consequence, since the bourne was in sight.

Twenty minutes' rapid walk brought her within its venerable shades. There had been a long dry season and the verge of the swamp scarcely deserved its name. It was



more a wood than a swamp. She penetrated yet half a mile into its interior, and here, lost in its impervious shades, she sat down upon the fallen trunk of a thunder-stricken tree and yielded herself up to the new delightful feeling of freedom and safety. In these thick shades who should find her? True, she was heated, tired, and hungry; but the fresh shades of the wood would cool her fever; the velvety ground invited repose; the trunk of the fallen tree offered a pillow; she would sleep and forget her hunger. So folding her arms under her head, with a deep sigh of satisfaction she closed her eyes and yielded herself up to sleep.

It was early in the afternoon when she fell asleep; it was late in the night when she awoke.

At first she knew not where she was—so profound had been her sleep, so perfect had been her forgetfulness.

She looked up.

The majestic cypress trees—the awful priesthood of the forest—stood around her lifting their solemn heads to Heaven. The deep-blue, starlit sky, celestial dome, bent over her. The dark, resplendent beauty of the summer midnight shone around her. Nor was she alone: true, the beasts were in their holes, and the birds in their nests, but myriads of little insects were chanting their joyous, yet subdued hallelujahs, in harmony with the serene luminous darkness of the hours.

Oh! often had Astrea, in her beautiful island home, lingered long at her window, or sauntered late upon her piazza, fascinated by the infinite loveliness of night, and listening to those humble little choristers, who continue nature's perpetual worship, by taking up the hymns of praise when the birds leave off at eve.

And now, when she awoke and found herself alone in this southern wood, with the veiled glory of night above, and the subdued melody of nature around, she felt strengthened, comforted, and cheered.

Oh! most benign are all the ministrations of nature, if we will only open our hearts to receive them.



Astrea had always been a loving child of nature ; and now, in the midst of her desolation, she still felt herself cherished by the universal mother.

The holy stars, like eyes of guardian angels watching her from heaven, strengthened her soul.

The venerable trees, gathered around her like protecting friends, comforted her heart.

Even the little insects—so small, yet so full of joy, and so earnest in worship—cheered her spirits.

“ It would seem easy to die here, and return to the bosom of a mother so full of benignity ; and even if I do not die, I feel that I shall be delivered, in some other way, from the destruction that I so much dread,” she said to herself, as she arose from her recumbent position and sat upon the trunk of the fallen tree.

Here she sat, entranced, for the next hour, watching that beautiful, slow process, in which the sober glory of the night merges into the magnificent splendor of day.

When the sun arose, flooding the whole landscape with dazzling light, bathing it in brilliant color, and kindling it into jubilant life ; and the birds awoke, filling the air with their joyous matutinal hymns ; and the flowers unfolded, breathing forth their morning offering of incense ; then Astrea joined the worship of nature in her great temple, and bowed her head in prayer.

This finished, she arose and walked forth in quest of such food as the wild could afford her.

On the outskirts of the wood she found some fine dew-berries, upon which she made a luscious breakfast.

Then, refreshed, she bent her steps toward the interior of the wood, with only the single object of getting as far as possible from the neighborhood of the plantation house.

It was strange, perhaps, almost to the verge of madness, for one in her condition to break into song ; but so great was her sense of relief from captivity and danger, and her enjoyment of freedom and safety ; so much was she rested



by her sound sleep, and refreshed by her simple breakfast; and finally, so perfect was her youthful sympathy with the joy of nature around her, that Astrea, wandering she knew not whither, carolled with the birds as she went!

Why do people, driven mad by the world of man, seek to escape to the world of nature? Why does madness seek the woods and waters?

Not because it is madness, but because, in the midst of the mental derangement, a sure, sure instinct, guides them to find comfort in the loving bosom of the universal mother.

All the long, long summer day, Astrea wandered leisurely, humming as she went.

At sunset she reached the very heart of the wood, where, pausing to look around, she said to herself:

"This is Arcadie! and here I could live, with my mother nature and her other children, all the summer long, if it were not for my loved ones at home!"

At these words—"my loved ones at home"—the song she had been trilling died away from her lips and out of her heart, and she sat down pensively at the foot of a great tree.

*Hark!—*

What sound is that which breaks upon her charmed ear?

A melodious, soft cry, exceeding strange and sweet, yet not the note of any bird of the air, nor the voice of the creature of the wood. It rises and dies away.

She murmurs to herself:

"These woods are as full of music as of beauty," and lifts her head to listen.

Again those soft, clear chimes rise bell-like upon the air, and now they are followed by a swift pattering, as of rain-drops upon fallen leaves, and a rustling in the branches near.

She starts to her feet.

Oh heaven! it is the bay of the bloodhounds! and they are on her track!



## CHAPTER XLI.

## THE RUSE.

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“Woman,  
For her honor struggling, hath oft shown  
Courage and strategy, which, by plumed chieftains,  
On the battle-field displayed, would have  
Won crowns and kingdoms, and the current  
Changed of the world's history.”

For a moment Astrea stood paralyzed—but only for a moment.

Her first thought was that any attempt to escape would be utterly futile; for how could she hope to outspeed the swift-footed hounds, whose deep-mouthed baying now seemed to fill the whole swamp with a wilderness of sound!

But in the same instant she remembered to have read that the smell of fresh blood would so deaden the sense of smell in a bloodhound that he could not follow scent.

Quick as thought, she snatched her tiny dagger from her bosom, cut a deep gash in one of her fingers, smeared the freely-flowing blood over the surface of a large, flat stone that was lying near, placed it directly in her track, and then wrapping her finger in her handkerchief, that no drop of blood might perchance betray the direction of her flight to the hounds, she glided away still further into the swamp. In a short time, she came to a sluggish, shallow brook, into which she at once stepped and waded along the centre of it for some distance, for the purpose of again throwing the hounds off the scent, in case they should by any means regain it after passing the blood-stone she had left in their path. She had read of fugitive Indian captives thus throwing their savage pursuers off the trail, and she thought the bloodhounds (which she now heard uttering strange cries at some distance behind her) might be baffled by the same stratagem.

After proceeding along the stream some distance, Astrea came to a large tree standing close to its banks, from



which large limbs stretched droopingly across its entire width. One of these she found that she could reach ; and it occurred to her that if she could draw herself upon it, and, by crawling along it, reach the trunk of the tree, she would be securely hidden in its thick foliage from even the most prying observation.

Immediately acting upon this thought, she seized the limb, and after a severe struggle succeeded in reaching the body of the tree, which she ascended until she thought she would be safe from any scrutiny to which her hiding-place could be subjected from below, and then finding a comfortable seat in the crotch of a huge limb, she sat down, calmly to await whatever might betide her.

She felt she had done her best to escape, and she left the result of her efforts to Providence.

The bloodhounds had for some little time ceased their cries altogether, and this circumstance inspired her with additional trustfulness and hope.

The cause of the cessation of the bloodhounds' cries was the fact that they had completely lost the scent by reason of Astrea's stratagem. On arriving at the stone which she had prepared for them, they ran their noses over it after the custom of their kind, and the powerful smell of the fresh blood with which she had so thickly smeared it, rendered them utterly incapable of following the faint scent left by the fugitive's flying footsteps. It was then that the hounds uttered those strange cries which Astrea heard as she was entering the brook, and which were the troubled, inarticulate explosions of their disappointment and wrath at being so hopelessly baffled.

After a short time, and while the hounds were still giving voice to their dissatisfaction, Rumford and his groom rode up.

"What, in the fiend's name, is the matter with the dogs?" exclaimed Rumford.

And dismounting as he spoke, the planter threw the bridle rein to his groom, and advanced to the side of the



hounds, which were at that moment running their noses for the fiftieth time over the blood-besmeared stone.

No sooner did Rumford's eyes fall on the stone, than he comprehended the cause of the dogs' strange conduct and divined the ruse that Astrea had played him. A burst of rage followed this discovery ; but it was soon displaced by a feeling of admiration at the wit and cleverness of his slave, as he verily believed Astrea to be.

Catching up the stone, he held it up to the vision of his groom, and exclaimed :

"See here, Sam ! Isn't that a neat trick for that quad-roon witch to play me and my dogs ! She's smart enough to be a white girl, that's certain ; and I don't know but she may really be Mrs. Colonel Greville, after all—only she can't be," he added to himself, "because that lady's appearance is too fresh in my memory for me to be imposed upon by Zora's mad tale."

Then hurling the stone far to one side, and again addressing the groom, he said :

"Come along this way, Sam, with the horses. I must get the dogs away from here, or they'll never find the scent again. The blood was fresh on the stone, and so it must have recently come from Zora's veins. Therefore, she cannot be very far from the spot."

So saying, Rumford called the dogs after him, and strode along rapidly, casting penetrating glances on every side, and followed, at a little distance, by Sam with the two horses.

As they chanced to take nearly the same direction that Astrea had gone, they after a time came to the stream down whose bed she had waded ; but they struck it much lower down than she did, and the consequence was that they came upon it at a point almost opposite to the tree in which she had taken refuge.

"This is fortunate," said Rumford, as he saw the water. "I will now wash these dogs' noses, and prepare them to take up the scent again in case we should be so lucky as to cross Zora's track."



He at once set about the task, and gave the noses of Castor and Pollux a thorough washing, much to their disgust. Then looking about him for a short time, he said:

"Now, Sam, dismount and tie the horses to that tree yonder, where they will have good stamping ground, and then we'll make a thorough search up and down this brook. Come, hurry, you rascal!" said Rumford, with a manifestation of impatience. "Why are you so slow! It will be sundown before we get under way, unless you make haste."

"De fact am, marse, dat I doesn't like de notion ob leaben' de hosses tied up heah, while we goes a rampagin' about troo de swamp," said Sam, with a dubious shake of the head. "How do we know what may happen to de poor dumb critters while we is gone? De bears may eat um up; or de hoss t'ieves, which you knows, marse, as how de swamp am de place where dey hide, may come and steal um; and den what you gwine to say when you come and find Saladin done gone, or see his bones a lyin' aroun' heah picked as clean as a turkey's at Chris'mas!"

"There is no danger, either from bears or horse thieves," Rumford replied, at the same time patting and caressing his horse, which was a handsome chestnut, and was claimed to be a regular thoroughbred. "If I thought," he added, "that any harm could come to Saladin, I don't know but I would give up my plan—and the girl too, sooner than lose *him*. But there is no danger. There are no bears about, and no horse thief would dare attempt to steal the horses from under my very nose."

"Don't you be too sartain sure ob dat, marse," said Sam. "S'pose a hoss tief get on Saladin's back onct, how you gwine to catch him, I should like to know, when dere aint anoder hoss in all de country dat can hole a candle to Saladin's heels. I tells you, marse, you'd better let dis chile stay heah wid de hosses, while you an' de dogs looks for Zora. Dat's *my* notion."

"Perhaps you are right, Sam," returned Rumford. "At



any rate, you could not help me much in my search after Zora, and so you *may* stay with the horses. But mind that you keep awake, else I may find *your* bones picked on my return. Or perhaps, that 'Spirit of the Swamp' that you darkies so greatly fear, may pay you a visit, and trouble your dreams."

At the mention of the "Spirit of the Swamp," Sam turned fairly blue with terror, and cried, in supplicating tones :

"Please, marse, don't go for to talk light ob *dat*. De Sperit don't like to be made fun ob, whateber you do ; so please let de Sperit alone, or dis chile won't be worf a per-simmon ag'in for a week, he won't."

"Well, well, never mind ! I didn't mean any disrespect to the Spirit. But see that you keep wide awake, and if you should hear me halloo, you halloo back again, that I may know in exactly what direction you are. And, by the way, *should* any thing unusual happen here, you just try your voice at a yell which would frighten every thing in the swamp, including bears, horse thieves, and the Spirit itself ;" and so saying, Rumford called the hounds, and strode away down the stream, the dogs running on in advance of him, and was soon out of sight.

Sam, meanwhile, after muttering and grumbling at his master's propensity to make light of the "Swamp Spirit," (which was a prodigious terror to all the superstitious negroes, every one of whom was certain that he or she had seen it gliding at dusk through the swamp, or about the plantation, on many occasions,) sat down at the foot of a large tree near by, and leaning his back and head against it, was soon in a dreamy doze, and forgetful of all the dangers that he had argued would be impending over the horses if they should be left alone.

Astrea, perched in her tree, had heard nearly all the preceding conversation between Rumford and his groom, and it had aroused varied emotions in her bosom.

She feared that her pursuer might come and examine



the tree she was hiding in, and if he could not see her, the bloodhounds might detect her presence by their keen scent. And this made her think of her cut finger and the blood upon her handkerchief that she had wrapped around it. She removed the handkerchief and found it saturated with blood. This excited fresh fears of discovery. Surely the hounds would scent all that blood, if they should come underneath the tree ! And she could not make away with it. To throw the handkerchief from her would only increase her danger, as it might fall beneath the tree and arrest the attention of Rumford if he should pass that way. Of course, he would come back again ; and he might cross the brook and come up on that side. The more she thought of these things, the more alarmed she became ; until at last she felt that to stay in the tree would lead to her certain detection. But how was she to find any better hiding-place ? She might be detected if she came down. In her wanderings, she might come upon her pursuer. At any rate, the more tracks she made, the more likely the hounds would be to get on the scent.

Suddenly a new thought occurred to her. Why could she not take advantage of Rumford's absence to get possession of Saladin, and so make sure of escape, as his fleetness was so great that the remaining horse could not long keep even in sight of him ! But how could she circumvent Sam ? She turned the question over in her own mind, and soon came to a conclusion. There were three ways in which she might do it. She might steal so quietly upon him as to be able to mount Saladin and be off before he would be able to prevent it ; or, in case of interference on Sam's part, she might resort to her dagger ; or, she might personate the dreaded Swamp Spirit, frighten Sam out of his senses, and by that means accomplish her object.

The last plan struck her as the best. She resolved to personate the " Spirit," and at once began to descend from her hiding-place, to put her scheme in execution.



## CHAPTER XLII.

## SAM'S TERRORS.

Black spirits and white,  
Blue spirits and gray.—*Shakespeare.*

ASTREA descended from her hiding-place with so much caution, and so silently, that Sam's drowsy ear received no intimation of her presence. After reaching the ground, she remained behind the huge trunk of the cypress while "getting herself up" for the part she was to play. Her resources for preparing to personate the "Spirit of the Swamp" were limited; but she felt confident that she could present a sufficiently startling appearance to upset Sam's self-possession long enough to enable her to accomplish her object, especially as it was becoming so dusky in the thick gloom of the swamp, that, at a little distance, an innocent object might be magnified by a mind as fearful and superstitious as the negro's into a terror-inspiring apparition.

Taking her blood-blotched pocket handkerchief, she cut holes in it for her eyes and mouth, and then tied it tightly over her face. This simple contrivance, taken in connection with her flowing white dress, gave her a really ghostly and fear-inspiring countenance; and on looking at herself in the mirror furnished by the water of the brook, to which she cautiously advanced, she was certain that she needed nothing more, except the assumption of a sepulchral tone of voice, to enable her to drive the superstitious groom as nearly out of his senses as would be necessary for her purpose.

So, crossing the brook, and keeping a tree between her and the negro, she cautiously advanced toward the spot where Saladin was quietly standing beneath the branches of a wide-spreading cypress. On arriving at Saladin's side, she pulled her sun bonnet over her face, that he might not be frightened by its unusual appearance, and patting him



gently, she spoke cooingly to him, in a low tone, so as to win his confidence. Finding him gentle, and not at all disposed to resent her familiarity, she quietly loosed him from the tree.

Thus far, she had not attracted Sam's attention in the slightest degree. He sat perfectly still at the foot of the tree against which he was leaning, and seemed to be either sound asleep or else utterly absorbed in meditation. So still and unconscious did he appear, that Astrea began to hope that she would be able to mount Saladin and dash away before Sam would be aroused, and which she probably might have done, had she not stepped upon a dry stick that snapped like a pistol beneath her foot, and caused the dozing groom to open his eyes and gaze around with a startled look.

Astrea immediately pushed back her bonnet from her face, and drawing up her form to its utmost height, she raised her right arm (keeping hold of Saladin's bridle with her left hand, which was behind her), and shook her finger menacingly at the astounded negro.

The effect on Sam was prodigious. Rising on his knees, he clasped his hands supplicatingly before him, his skin assuming an ashen hue, his eyes glaring, and his teeth chattering.

For a moment, Astrea was at a loss what to do next—whether to try to mount Saladin, without saying a word, before Sam could offer any interference, or whether to seek to deepen the effect of her appearance on him by “making a few remarks appropriate to the occasion.” Fearing that an attempt to get upon Saladin's back might seem such an unspiritual operation to the groom as to disillude him to a dangerous degree, she resolved to call upon her vocal powers to help her play out the game to the safest possible conclusion.

She therefore advanced a few steps toward the quaking negro, and glowering upon him in as ghostly a manner as



she knew how to assume, she again raised her hand, and in her most sepulchral tones, said :

“Rash, intruding man! what are you doing there, upon the sacred spot where my body has so long lain buried?”

The effect of this address upon Sam was highly electrical. Giving a sudden leap and scramble to one side, he again came upon his knees, clasped his hands, and raising them deprecatingly toward what he veritably believed the dreaded “Swamp Spirit,” he groaned out :

“I didn’t know it! ’deed an’ ’deed I didn’t, Mist’us Sperit. I neber knowed as how your sacred body was buried anywhere, ’deed I didn’t—leastways at de foot ob dat tree, or I neber would hab sot dis yer ole carcasse down dere—neber, so help me heaben an’ all de angels—neber.”

“That is false,” replied Astrea, in her best ghost tone. “You knew that my bones were lying there, and you came here to dig them up and carry them away.”

“’Fore God, Mist’us Sperit,” cried Sam, with the perspiration starting upon his face, “dis yer chile neber t’ought ob such a ting in all de born days ob his life. I jes’ sot down dere to wait for Marse Rumford to come back after he an’ de houn’s had tak’t a look for Miss Zora, who’s run’d away from de plantation into dis yer swamp. An’ dat’s jes’ de blessed trufe, an’ nuffin’ else; an’ ef you’ll jes’ wait till Marse Rumford gets back—an dat’s his yell, now,” exclaimed Sam, in a tone of relief, as a loud halloo rang through the swamp; “he aint fur away, an’ I’ll jes yell back again, so he’ll know jes’ whar to come, an’——”

“Silence!” said Astrea, firmly. The idea that Rumford and the bloodhounds were on their way back, nerved her with desperation, and brightened all her faculties. “You are deceiving me!” she continued, at the same time drawing her dagger from her bosom and advancing toward the negro, but without letting go of the bridle of Saladin, who consequently followed her. “You are deceiving me!” she repeated, menacingly, “and I must punish you by cutting



out your lying tongue!" and she held up the gleaming dagger to his view.

This was too much for Sam's nerves to bear. Springing to his feet, just as another halloo from Rumford came sounding through the swamp, he gave a responsive yell of terror, and dashed away in the direction he believed his master and the dogs to be, and was speedily out of sight.

Astrea, fully appreciating the preciousness of moments, at once pulled the blood-stained handkerchief from her face, led Saladin to the side of a log, by the assistance of which she clambered into the saddle, and rode off, in a direction opposite to that from which Rumford's halloos had come, as fast as the impeding branches and logs, and her own uncomfortable seat upon her master's saddle, would permit.

After proceeding a short distance, it occurred to her that she ought not to leave the other horse for Rumford to pursue her with; and riding back, she, with her dagger, cut the bridle with which the horse was tied, and taking hold of one piece of the rein, she led the animal away as fast as she could make him travel; and as he seemed to like the idea of being permitted to accompany his companion Saladin, and went on as briskly as Astrea could ride through the swamp, she found that the taking of him along did not impede her flight. She was also confirmed in the wisdom of her action, by the reflection that a reckless rider, like Rumford, mounted on an inferior horse, might easily have overtaken her in the swamp, inasmuch as she could not there urge Saladin to any thing like the speed he was capable of showing.

In the course of half an hour Astrea emerged from the swamp, and came upon a road, running east and west (as she could tell by the last glinting of the sun's rays on the western horizon), and leading she knew not whither. It did not seem to be a road that was much travelled, as it was to some extent overgrown with grass; and as far as



she could see in any direction there was not the slightest sign of a human habitation. Which way to go, she knew not. It might be that in one direction or the other the road led to Rumford's plantation, or so near it that her safety would be endangered should she be so unfortunate as to go thitherward.

After turning the matter over in her mind for a moment, it occurred to her that if the horses knew the way home, and were left to their own guidance, they would be likely to take the homeward way, and so she resolved to see what direction they would go when left to themselves. She therefore let go of the rein of the led horse, and allowed the bridle to lie upon Saladin's neck. The horses at once took their way eastward.

"That must be the way to Rumford's," thought Astrea, "if either way leads to his plantation; so I'll take the other course. But I don't want to lead that horse any longer. I'll let him go on toward the east, while I ride Saladin westward. Then, if my pursuers track me hither, they will find that the horses have gone in different directions, but they will not be able to tell which one carried me away on his back. That will baffle them again, and give me more time."

Acting upon this theory, Astrea gave the led horse a sharp blow with a switch that she had provided herself with as a substitute for a riding whip, which sent him cantering along the road to the east, while she turned Saladin's head and rode at a brisk pace in the opposite direction, the gloom of approaching night rapidly closing around her unknown path, which, for aught she knew, might be thickly strewn with dangers. The lonely wanderer, faint for lack of sustenance, and exhausted with toil and excitement, felt the hazardousness of her situation in all its bitterness; but putting up a prayer to Heaven for protection, she rode on into the gathering darkness with unfaltering trust in that Fatherly Power which had already so signally rescued her from what had seemed unescapable perils.



We will now return to Rumford and his sable coadjutor.

The last we saw of Sam he was rushing madly through the swamp, in the direction whence he heard his master's halloos, in order to escape the doom threatened him by what he believed to be the incensed Spirit of the Swamp.

The frightened negro so filled the swamp with his yells of terror, as he ran, that he no longer heard the voice of Rumford. He rushed on, over logs and through bushes; and as every uncouth-looking stump and waving bush seemed to him, as it loomed through the gloom, to be a threatening spirit of wrath, the poor fellow was actually in danger of losing what little sense nature had endowed him with. And at last, when a vine caught his foot, and sent him heels-over-head into a clump of brambles, he thought he was actually in the clutches of the fiends, and roared for mercy with a vehemence and strength of lungs that caused his master, who was not far off, to hasten to the spot in astonishment and alarm.

On coming up with his yelling groom, Rumford seized hold of his leg, and dragging him from the brambles, sternly demanded an explanation of his inexplicable conduct. But Sam was too much under the influence of his superstitious terror to give his master an explanation. He could only beg for mercy, and protest that he had never done any thing to injure any "sperit" whatever in all the born days of his life, so help him heaven.

Rumford at last became so impatient that he seized Sam by the ears and shook him, and cuffed him, till the physical pain overcame the mental superstition, and brought the fellow to his senses. But even then, he could get no satisfaction of him. Sam told him how the "Swamp Sperit" had come suddenly upon him, "lookin' de awfullest, marse, ob any t'ing eber seed on dis yer yurth," and accused him of trying to dig up its body, that had been buried (as Sam told it) at the foot of the tree where he had sat down, for ever so many thousand years. And that when he denied



having any such intention, and was only waiting for his master to come back, "de sperit drawed a awful sharp knife out ob its bosom, and proceeded to cut out dis yer chile's tongue by de roots, which I knows, marse, as how it would have done, sart'in sure, only I heerd you holler and run'd away to meet you, which I'm glad I did."

Rumford was non-plussed. That Sam had seen *something*, he felt sure, as the fellow's terror had been too genuine to spring from nothing. But what could it have been? He did not believe in the existence of spirits, but he did believe in the existence of horse thieves. He feared some of the latter had played a trick on Sam, and frightened him away, that they might make off with the horses. This alarmed him excessively; and putting the dogs on the track that Sam had made in his flight (for it had become too dark in the swamp to be guided by the sense of vision), he followed them as speedily as possibly to the place where the horses had been left.

On seeing that both of the horses were gone, Rumford was confirmed in his idea that the whole affair had been a ruse of horse thieves, and vented his rage at Sam, by pouring out a volley of imprecations, and threats of vengeance, that almost made his woolly hair stand straight on end. Having thus given vent to his anger and chagrin, he was about to start for home, when his attention was attracted by something white lying on the ground near by, and at which the dogs were snuffing eagerly. On picking it up, he found it to be a lady's pocket handkerchief, spotted with blood. Instantly it flashed upon him that *that* was Zora's (Astrea's) handkerchief; and that it was *she* who had personated the Swamp Spirit, for the purpose of frightening Sam, and getting possession of one of the horses to escape upon. But what had become of the other horse? Zora could not want both, and she had no accomplice. This part of the mystery he soon solved by taking it for granted that the horse not taken by Zora had broken loose to follow



after his companion, or to go home—and homeward Rumford himself now went, with a reckless haste that put Sam to his best pedestrianism.

It was nearly nine o'clock when Rumford arrived at his plantation, where he found his overseer, Steppins, and several of the house servants, in a state of wonder bordering on alarm; owing to the fact that the horse which Sam had ridden away a few hours before, when he went after the hounds with his master, had returned home alone and riderless. No sooner did Rumford learn that the groom's horse had returned than he made eager inquiries as to the direction whence he had come, and when he had arrived.

Steppins stated that he had met the horse, half an hour before, as he (the overseer) was strolling down the old Lighthouse road—the road that Astrea had struck, on emerging from the swamp, and which owed its name to the fact that it led to the ruins of a lighthouse that years before had stood upon a high point on the river bank, many miles below Rumford's plantation)—for a walk. The horse was trotting along the road toward the plantation, and Steppins, recognizing him, had caught and mounted him, and ridden some ways back along the road to see if he could discover any signs of Sam or his master; and getting no trace of them, he had ridden back to the house, to await the development of events. He had become very uneasy, he said, about the absence of Mr. Rumford and his groom, especially as, on examining the bridle rein of the horse, which seemed to have been broken, he found that it had been cut. "This," said Steppins, "showed that it was not altogether an accident that the horse was thus found loose, and I couldn't account for it."

"I can," said Rumford, savagely, and bringing his hand down heavily on the table before which he had seated himself. "I can account for it. The bridle was cut by that girl Zora. I had thought that the horse broke loose, in order to follow Saladin; but now I see that she cut him



loose, and took him off on purpose to prevent immediate pursuit. She is a smart girl, and no mistake—altogether too smart to lose. Go to the stable, Sam, and saddle Rokane and Duroc. If you have them at the gate in ten minutes, I'll give you a silver dollar. If you do *not*, I'll have you whipped!"

Sam instantly disappeared, and Rumford, turning to Steppins, said:

"We'll give Zora another chase. The moon is coming up bright—almost as bright as day, and she has not more than an hour the start. She must have come out of the swamp, upon the old Lighthouse road, and then leaving Sam's horse to take its own course, she rode Saladin away in the opposite direction. I cannot afford to lose either her or Saladin, and when it comes to losing them both, *that* is more than any man could stand. I'd ride all night first—yes, half-a-dozen nights and days in succession. That young gipsy has excited my admiration. What a pity she isn't *really* white."

And going to a cupboard, Rumford took therefrom a decanter and a small glass, and filling the latter with brandy, tossed it off, with a smack of his lips, and said:

"That will keep off the night chills. I must give Sam a dose of it, to keep his spirits up. If you were only a good horseman, Steppins, you should go along with us. I think I'll take another glass," suiting the action to the word.

"There comes Sam with the horses," he said, as he set down the glass. "Bring that bottle along, Steppins, and the glass too. It will fire Sam up."

So saying, he strode to the gate, followed by the overseer with the drinking implements. Sam was there, inside of his ten minutes, and in good spirits, at the idea of having won his silver dollar, which were still more exhilarated when Steppins, at the command of Rumford, poured out and handed him a glass of the brandy.

"Go into the house and stay up till I come back, Step-



pins," said Rumford, as he and Sam mounted their horses; "and keep that bottle for a companion. Tell the girls not to go to bed either. I shall have Zora back before midnight, and then we shall all want some supper. Where are the hounds? Here, Castor! here, Pollux! come, boys, come! You may be of service to us yet."

The dogs came bounding from the house, at their master's call, and the whole party—master, servant, and hounds—were soon dashing along the old Lighthouse road, the bright rays of a southern moon giving them almost as much light as the sun itself.

And where was the poor fugitive whom they were thus pursuing to the death!—aye, to drag her back to a doom which to her would be worse than ten thousand deaths!

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## CHAPTER XLIII.

### AT BAY.

She stands, as stands the stricken deer,  
Checked midway in the fearful chase,  
When bursts upon his eye and ear  
The gaunt gray robber baying near  
Between him and his hiding-place;  
While still behind, with yell and blow,  
Sweeps like a storm the coming foe!—*Whittier.*

ASTREA had not ridden very fast along the old road. She had never practised equestrianism much; and besides, she found it awkward riding on Rumford's saddle. She could not fix the stirrups so as to get any support from them, without first dismounting, and she did not like to do that—she feared some evil would come of it. So she rode on, as best she could, for several miles, when, coming to a clear brook that crossed the road, over which a rude bridge was thrown, she thought she would dismount, and try to quench



her thirst, which had been so great for some time as to occasion her much suffering.

She accordingly dismounted, and leading Saladin to the edge of the brook, on one side of the road, allowed him to drink his fill, while she knelt on the turf and did the same, taking care, however, to keep fast hold of the bridle, lest the horse should run away from her.

After resting by the brookside for a short time, she contrived to fix the stirrups (by shortening one, and throwing the other over the saddle so as to bring them both on the same side, as she had seen countrywomen do in New England, during her school-girl days) so she could ride more easily and to much better advantage; and then leading Saladin to the side of the bridge, and standing upon it, she mounted him, and rode on at a moderate pace.

She did not fear pursuit that night. She had reasoned to herself that Rumford and Sam would be a long time in finding their way home. She thought she left them much further from the plantation than was really the case, and supposed that it would be midnight at least, if not morning, before they would reach the house. Then nobody could imagine, she thought, which way she had gone, nor get any trace of her until late in the following day, and by that time she would be—where?

She did not know where. But she would be far from Rumford. And she could pass for a young lady among strangers—of that she felt assured; and so she rode along, hoping after awhile to come to some plantation, or other abode, of whose inmates she could obtain shelter and food, and under whose roof she could find repose.

Thus thinking, Astrea rode leisurely along, with a feeling of comparative security, until she was suddenly startled by the sound of horses galloping over the bridge which she had crossed not a great while before. She judged by the sound that they were coming at a rapid gait, and a deadly fear smote to her heart. She felt an instinctive convic-



tion that the horsemen were in pursuit of her; and touching Saladin with her switch, she accelerated his pace to a rapid gallop, in the hope of, at least, not allowing her pursuers to lessen the distance between them.

But Astrea found riding at such a swift gait to be wearisome work, and she soon came to the conclusion that in her exhausted condition, she could not long permit Saladin to travel at such a rate of speed. Meanwhile, she tried to keep her ear attentive to any sound of hoofs that might possibly reach it from behind, in order to judge whether or not her pursuers were gaining upon her.

There had been but few elevations in the road thus far, and they were too slight to enable her to see any distance back; besides, there were too many turns in the road for that; so she had no chance of *seeing* if she was pursued. But by-and-by she heard the sound of horses galloping behind her—faintly, it is true, but she could not be mistaken. In a short time she heard them more distinctly. They were gaining upon her, *and she had done her best!*

She could not ride any faster than she was then going; and even at her present pace, she felt that she could not hold out a great while longer.

A turn in the road brought her in sight of a hill, several rods ahead. That alarmed her, as she feared that in passing over its summit her pursuers would see her, the moon was shining so brightly; and to prevent that, she rode close to the side, in the shade of the tall trees. She cast a quick glance behind; but the turn in the road shut off the view. It was not so ahead, however. The descent from the hill was gradual, and the road was straight as an arrow's flight, as far as she could see.

She knew that her pursuers were fast gaining upon her; and from the top of this hill she was just passing they would be almost certain to get a view of her. Astrea almost determined to abandon Saladin and seek refuge in the forest. There would be no dogs to find her this time,



she thought; and she could certainly hide so that no human eyes could discover her place of concealment.

But as she thus communed with herself, Saladin was galloping on, and she experienced a feeling of terror at the idea of stopping him and dismounting. While she was being borne so swiftly along, it *seemed* as though she must be safe; but if she stopped—if she dismounted—why, there was no knowing what ills might come. So she kept on, until hearing a shout behind her, she turned and saw two horsemen just coming over the brow of the hill—one a white man, the other a negro.

“It is they! Rumford and Sam!” she exclaimed. “Oh, I am lost! I cannot hold out another half hour.”

In her despair she struck Saladin several sharp blows with her whip, and away he flew like the wind. Astrea nearly lost her seat several times, and tried in vain to rein up her steed. Becoming greatly alarmed she turned him out of the road, against a bank of earth, and by that means stopped him with a suddenness that threw her forward upon his neck. This occurrence determined her to abandon him, and trust her safety to flight and concealment in the woods.

She alighted, ran along the bank until she came to a low, shelving place, over which she scrambled into some bushes, and thence across a small open space, into the woods. As she saw how thick the underbrush was in the forest, and as the gloom deepened about her, she began to feel as though she was safe once more. Pressing on, she soon came to another open and cleared space, which stretched away as far as she could see. This troubled her, as the moon shone so brightly down upon the field that she knew she could be seen, should she attempt to cross it, at a considerable distance. So she kept along in the edge of the woods skirting the field. In crossing a rise of ground, she saw, at some distance, what seemed to be a group of buildings—a plantation house, and the cabins and outbuildings surrounding it.



Should she go there and claim shelter? What if Rumford should track her there! Would the family believe *her* story? or would they not rather believe *his*?

While she was debating this matter in her mind, the bay of the bloodhounds struck upon her ear, and seemed to freeze the blood in her heart. Oh what a mistake she had made in abandoning Saladin! If she had supposed that Rumford had his hounds with him she would not have done so. But now it was too late! They had found where she had left the horse, and the dogs had again been put upon her track. But she could again baffle them, as she had done before. Drawing her dagger from her bosom, she looked hastily about her for something to smear with blood. She could find nothing but a few sticks. These would not do, and in despair at the delay, as the baying of the hounds came rapidly nearer, she caught her bonnet from her head to use for that purpose, when she heard the pattering of feet in the bushes, and looking back, she saw the bloodhounds in sight—she could see the glare of their eyes, as they strained to reach their prey, and heard their cry fiercer than ever, as they saw their victim within their certain grasp.

She turned to fly; but in an instant they had dashed through the bushes, leaped to her shoulders, and dragged her to the ground.

She swooned with terror; but the last sight that her fainting eyes took in was the form of Rumford, as he emerged from the thicket and stood over her.

“Good dogs! Pretty pups! come off now,” said Rumford, addressing the hounds, who having pulled Astrea to the ground, now held her fast without hurting her.

The dogs returned, and crouched at their master’s feet.

“Here, Sam,” he continued, addressing the groom, who had followed him, “take up this girl and carry her to where we left our horses.”

The man silently obeyed, and they left the wood by a



short cut unknown to Astrea, and came to a spot where the two horses were tied.

"Give her to me now, and mount," said Rumford.

The negro did so, and Rumford sat the still fainting form of Astrea on the horse before the man, laid her head upon his broad chest, and directed him to support her with his left arm while he guided his horse with his right. Rumford took charge of Saladin (who had been caught and tied with the other horses), leading him by the bridle rein; and thus they went on toward home. In due time they arrived at the old plantation house, where the still swooning Astrea was taken to her own room and laid upon the bed, and given up to the charge of Venus.

The first object that Astrea's eyes fell upon when she awoke from her swoon, was the kind face of Venus bending over her and dropping tears.

"*Oh-h-h, Venus!*" exclaimed the poor girl, with a prolonged wail of despair.

"'Tis hard, honey, berry hard; I did all I could for you; I kept 'em off your track all day yes'day an' dis mornin', too, wid a cock an' a bull story of your being gone to bed to sleep de gran' roun's. But at las', you see, chile, dat tale wouldn't bear tellin' no longer, an' so dey bus' open your room an' foun' you gone, an' den went to hunt you."

Astrea suddenly started, felt in her bosom, and then smiled. The little poniard was safe. It was now past midnight. She knew that the dreaded interview with Rumford could not take place until the morning; she knew, also, that after that no further grace would be granted her. She determined to husband her feelings to meet the crisis.

So when Venus brought her up the very best supper that the kind-hearted girl could make from the plentiful pantry of Ben Lomond, Astrea did justice to it.

Venus carried away the service, and soon returned, dragging a narrow mattress after her.

"Ole Marse say how he let me sleep in here long o' you



to-night, as you's poorly," she said, as she spread her mattress beside Astrea's bed.

"Oh, Venus, that will be a comfort indeed!"

"Yes, honey, I knows it will. I spects he is a gwine to kill you wid kindness now, and conquer you dat way; but I spects he gwine lock us in for all dat—dere now, what I tell you?" whispered Venus, as the click of the turning key sounded in the lock.

Astrea did not mind that, now her fate could not be decided before morning, and then it would be in her own hands. And for the night, the presence of Venus secured her from intrusion.

Venus settled herself upon her mattress, and was soon in the deep and heavy sleep peculiar to her race.

Astrea, filled with troubled thought, lay long with her eyes closed, yet not asleep. The room was in perfect darkness. How long exactly she had lain thus is not known, when again, as on a former occasion, a soft, bright light seemed to penetrate even through her closed eyelids, and cause her to open them; and again, oh! wonderful! she saw the shining apparition of the beautiful woman advancing toward her; but now, though the central star was still a charred mass in her crown, and the dark stain remained upon her garment, yet her countenance had lost a portion of that seemingly infinite despair it had worn before. She advanced and stood before Astrea, motionless in form and feature, as if waiting to be addressed.

And again Astrea felt a nameless influence dispel her fears and impell her to speak.

"Spirit! what is your will with me to-night?"

The voice that answered proceeded not from those beautiful but motionless spirit lips, and fell not upon the outward ears of the hearer, but seemed rather to proceed from the depths of Astrea's own soul.

"Lady! you have not been regardless of my warning; you have not hesitated to expose your life to the dreadful



death of a slow starvation in the woods, rather than transgress. But I had leave to watch you while you slept to keep away the deadly reptile of the thicket, and the deadlier miasma of the swamp. So that you took no harm. I will be with you again in your hour of greatest peril. Fear not, therefore, to meet the wicked man. You shall be saved."

And before these words were fairly finished, the vision had faded away.

For a few moments Astrea remained in amazement, uncertain whether she had seen, or dreamed; of one thing only she felt sure—that, whether vision or dream, it had greatly revived her hopes, and so she fell asleep and slept till morning.

Venus was the first to wake and roll up her mattress.

And so when Astrea opened her eyes they fell upon the kind creature, who stood before the dressing-glass tying up her turban.

Astrea also arose and began to look around for the white dress she had worn since leaving the ship, but she saw no trace of it.

Venus caught her reflection in the glass and turned around.

"Lor, honey, you up? Dat right. You looking for your gown? Yes, honey, you jes' ought to have seen it when I took it offen you las' night. Not fit for ole beggar woman, much less young gall. So I jes' sent it down to de laundry. Dere, honey, dem's sent in here for you," she said, pointing to a large trunk that stood open in a corner of the room.

Astrea went to this trunk, wondering whether it contained the wardrobe of her unhappy predecessor in this room—poor Lula. There were gay and even costly dresses, and all articles requisite to a woman's toilet.

Astrea selected the plainest—a black silk. It fitted her near enough for service, and when she had washed her face and combed her hair, she put it on.

"De door's unlocked, chile," said Venus, as she tried the handle and found it so.



They both went out into the passage, where they parted, Venus to go into the kitchen and Astrea into the dining-room, where her "duties" lay.

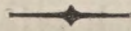
Rumford was standing at one of the windows with a newspaper in his hand. He turned, and, on seeing Astrea, said :

"Come! that is well! not sulky this morning? That is right. But I say, my girl, you must never play me that trick again; never give me so much trouble again as long as we both live. But, however, we will talk about that after breakfast, when, once for all, we must come to an understanding."

"Yes, sir," replied Astrea, with grave dignity.

"And now, Zora, ring for my chocolate."

Astrea obeyed, and the summons was answered by Cybele, bearing the pot of chocolate.



## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE INTERVIEW.

I know thee not, old man; fall to thy prayers;  
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester;  
Make less thy body, hence, and more thy grace;  
Leave gormandizing; know the grave doth gape  
For thee thrice wider than for other men.  
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest:  
Presume not that I am the thing I seem.—*Shakespeare.*

WHEN Rumford had finished breakfasting, he deliberately arose, locked the dining-room door leading into the passage, took the key from it, and turning to Astrea, said :

"Sit down and get your breakfast, my girl; I prefer, since you are to be, in some degree, my companion, that you do not eat or in any way associate intimately with the negroes in the kitchen; neither do I suppose that, brought



up as you have been, such association would be agreeable to you. You will always, therefore, take your meals in this room, after me. Sit down now and breakfast, and when you have finished, come to me in the adjoining parlor. We must arrive at a mutual understanding, and I shall take care this time that you do not elude the interview."

And so saying, Rumford passed into the front parlor, stretching the communicating door wide open so that he could keep Astrea in sight.

Astrea made no reply to his speech, which seemed indeed to require none. She sat down at the table and slowly drank a cup of chocolate.

Rumford, in the meantime, walked up and down the floor of the parlor, and watched.

Astrea did not linger at the table with the view of deferring the interview. That which she felt to be inevitable, she resolved to meet fearlessly, trusting still in Heaven. She soon, therefore, arose and passed into the parlor, saying, as she stood before the planter:

"Mr. Rumford, I am here."

"That is well, Zora," he replied. And he walked back into the dining-room, rang the bell, unlocked the door, and said to old Cybele, who answered the summons:

"Remove the service."

Cybele looked doubtful about obeying, until she had glanced at the table, and seen by the second used cup and saucer that Astrea had also breakfasted. Then, with a grunt, she set about clearing the table.

Rumford returned to the front parlor, closed the door communicating with the dining-room, and locked it. Then tried the door leading into the passage, and found it fast.

Astrea watched his proceedings, and saw that she was a close prisoner; but she felt the little poniard in her bosom, and smiled to know that she was safe!

Rumford threw himself upon the sofa, and signed to Astrea to seat herself beside him.



But Astrea drew herself up with dignity, and took no farther notice of the intimation.

"Sit down! sit down here on the sofa by me, Zora; for we are quite alone, and I wish to have some good understanding with you! Come! why don't you move? Sit down! sit down!" said Rumford, impatiently patting the end of the sofa upon which he invited her to seat herself.

"A slave does not sit in the presence of her master!" said Astrea, with a fine irony.

"But when her master permits," said Rumford.

"Her position is still too humble to embolden her to avail herself of such liberty," replied Astrea, with a curling lip and flashing eye, that neutralized the humility of her words.

"Blame it, then! if her master commands!" cried Rumford, half laughing, half provoked at what seemed to him very amusing resistance on the part of a girl entirely in his power; "if her master commands, how then, Zora?"

"The servant, having no other option, would obey, I suppose," answered Astrea, deliberately taking up one of the light straw chairs, carrying it to the extremity of the room farthest from Rumford, and seating herself in it.

"Blast it! not there! here, here, on the sofa beside me, where I can talk to you at ease. I have much to say to you, my girl, which it behooves you to hear," said Rumford, again impatiently patting the spot where he wished Astrea to sit.

"I have excellent ears, sir, and can hear quite well at this—respectful—distance."

"Bosh! come *here, here!* I say *here!* I command you!" cried the planter, impatiently repeating his gesture.

"I will not, sir," firmly replied Astrea.

"'Not!'" exclaimed the planter, in a state of mind blending surprise, displeasure, and mirth. "Did you say, 'Not?'"

"I will not, sir!" repeated Astrea, emphatically.



“By the demon, but that is good! I like that! But I see how it is! This girl has been well educated and well brought up, and is vastly superior to her class; she has never had a lover, and consequently, in her maiden pride, she would be wooed before she is won! And deuse take me if I don’t like her the better for it. I am sick of your too willing ones, however tempting in other respects:

‘For the fruit that will fall without shaking  
Indeed is too mellow for me.’

So, this proud maiden beauty, slave as she is, will be wooed before she is won! Yes, and she is worth wooing and worth winning too! And I shouldn’t wonder the least in the world if she insisted on being married as well as courted! But of course she can’t come that game over me!”

These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of Rumford, as he sat contemplating with admiration the stately and beautiful form of Astrea, as she sat like a princess in her distant chair.

At last he spoke up:

“Zora, nonsense, about this relation of master and slave. It is true, I purchased you, and paid a good round sum too; as now that I know your worth, I would pay ten times as much to possess you. But, child, I did not buy a delicate and beautiful creature like you to make a servant of you, any more than I would buy a costly ermine robe to make a door-mat. No, my dear, I liked your looks from the very first, and I purchased you to make you the companion and solace of my declining years; the pet and darling of my affections; the light and life of my domestic hearth; in one word, my dear Zora, I purchased you, not for a servile slave, but for a beloved companion, who should fill, in my heart and home, the place of wife and children; who should rule my house and servants; share my pleasures; command my purse; nurse me tenderly in sickness; close my eyes in



death; and finally inherit my fortune! This, my dear girl, is the position I offer you!"

"And you dare to speak these words to me! to me, a pure woman and a wedded wife!" gasped Astrea, nearly speechless with indignation.

"Stuff, girl! that's your monomania again—the one subject upon which you are cracked! But it is the full of the moon, or but little past it, and I hope, with the wane, the hallucination will pass away. In the meantime, pray do not mention it to me again, my dear girl. And, Zora, let me tell you that the tone you adopt toward me is scarcely proper or grateful. And you have something to be grateful for."

"Oh, have I, indeed!" exclaimed Astrea, bitterly.

"Yes, you have, you spoiled and inexperienced child! Suppose I had not purchased you? You would have been taken to New Orleans, and exposed for sale on the auction block. Some graceless scamp would have bought you, and after loving you for a little while, would have grown tired of you, and sold you to some one else; or he would have married a wife, and brought her home to queen it over you, and break your heart; or, you would have been bought by some married man, to wait upon his wife, whom your beauty would have driven mad with jealousy—and so, between the favor of your master and the hatred of your mistress, your life would have been a purgatory. Such, or some such fate would have been yours, Zora, had I not purchased you. Now, see how much happier your position is! Here you have no jealous mistress to oppress you; no rival to distress you; here you need fear no female despotism, and no male inconstancy; here you are the sole mistress of the house—the sole darling of the old man, in whom you need never fear change—for men of my age do not change, like younger ones, my girl. They get used to a pretty, affectionate girl, and the longer they know her, the better they love her; and the length of years they live together does but cement the



attachment. Come now, my dear girl, think over what I have said—remember it is this—that you shall be the only love of my heart, my wife in every thing but the name, and that name I could not in any case offer any girl of your color, because, however worthy of it she might be, the laws of the State would not sanction it. Come, my child—think of what I offer you! I will not further distress you this morning; but this evening I may perhaps see you again.”

And so saying, the planter arose to leave the parlor.

“Stay!” said Astrea, sternly.

Half laughing at the peremptory tone taken by his slave, Rumford paused, saying:

“As long as you like, my dear. I had supposed my presence to be unwelcome. I am glad to find it otherwise!” And he threw himself into a chair.

“You have spoken words to me, which it was dishonor to my ears to hear, and deeper dishonor to your lips to utter. You are an old man—old in years, and older still in a constitution ruined by vice——”

“Zora!” interrupted the planter, sternly.

“Yes, sir—I will speak to you plainly. From me you shall hear the truth, if you never heard it before. Let others flatter and deceive you to your soul’s eternal perdition, if they will. Heaven knows that I will not. I repeat, that you are an old man—older still by vice than by years! Between you and the grave there can be but a little while—a few years at most—perhaps but a few months, a few weeks, or a few days. Life at your age, spent as you spend it, is always short and very precarious——”

“So much the better for you, my dear, if you will but stop preaching, and consent to comfort what is left of it to me!” said Rumford, with gay defiance.

“Be silent on that insulting subject! I abhor you, old man—there is nothing on earth so loathsome and so appalling to my soul as vicious old age! And yet it is even more in pity than in disgust that I warn you—look to your-



self! You are old, infirm, feeble! You are sensual, gluttonous, and drunken! You are despotic, passionate, excitable! At any moment these combined influences may occasion your sudden death. I know it! And then? what then? You would be hurried without a moment for repentance, and with all your lifetime's load of sin upon your soul, into the awful presence of your Judge! Think of that, old man, and tremble."

"Well, you see I *don't* tremble, though you force me to think of disagreeable subjects—you witch!" said Rumford, with gay indifference.

"Mr. Rumford, do you believe in God, and in a future state of rewards and punishments?"

"Of course I believe in God; but as to the future state of rewards and punishments, that is all bosh!"

"Then I can talk no longer with you, sir. If you reject the truths of the Christian revelation, I can have no further hold upon your conscience. I can only pray that the Lord, to whom all things are possible, may enlighten your soul."

"Girl! Zora! you talk to me as if you thought I was the greatest sinner alive! I am not. I am known all over the country for a good fellow. To prove it to you, I sit here and listen to a lot of abuse from my own slave, that no other man alive would take even from his wife! I think that proves I am not a bad fellow. And what the deuse!—I have never robbed or murdered any body—never cheated, or lied to, or wronged any one in my life. Of what, therefore, am I accused?"

"Lulu," said Astrea, in a low, significant voice.

For a moment the planter started and changed color. Then recovering himself, with a light laugh, he said:

"I never wronged Lulu. I bought her as I bought you. I never compelled her inclinations. She loved me willingly; and I treated her well, and gave her lots of fine clothes and jewelry, and took her to the Springs every summer, where she passed for my ward, and danced at all the balls with



the best ladies in the land. And so I will take you, if you will be good and reasonable."

"But she died! And how did she die?"

"Took a fit of religious fanaticism all of a sudden at a camp meeting, and wanted to separate herself from me. Well, if she had been only my companion she might have done it, but being a slave, she could not come that game over the old fellow. And so the fool took her position so to heart, that she pined away and died. That was not *my* fault, you know."

"Not your fault, oh miserable and blinded man! I tell you, that when you shall meet that poor lost girl at the dread judgment seat of your offended Maker, you will find that the sins you have compelled her to commit will be lifted from her soul and thrown upon yours, and weigh it down to eternal perdition! And now I warn you, old man. Slave as you believe me to be, I do not fear you! I can neither be persuaded, tempted, nor compelled to dishonor as Lulu was! Believe me, no woman, pure in thought, word, and deed, ever can. I hold my fate and your sin the hollow of my hand! I know and feel it with a deep conviction. Therefore—and this is why I called you back—do not dare to pass the threshold of my room to-night! Slave as you think me, my chamber is my sanctuary, and shall be held most sacred from the intrusion of any man, even of my so-called master! Therefore, Mr. Rumford, if you even make the attempt to enter my chamber, this night or any night, it will be at your own utmost peril! You are warned!"

"Whe-ew!" said the planter, pursing up his lips, "what a splendid actress you would have made! But I like you all the better for it, Zora! I like you all the better for it, my girl! And I'm blamed if you were white, if I wouldn't marry you to-morrow! But, as it is, it is no go, you know. As to your defying me to come into your room, I like that, too! That is piquant! That is sauce to the goose! I shall



come all the surer for that defiance, my girl! Do you think I am afraid of your little claws and teeth, you pretty little kitten? No! I have served through the Mexican war, and faced a charge of bayonets, and do you think a woman's nails or tongue, either, can turn me back? Besides, my dear, you will preach from a very different text a month hence." And so saying, Rumford unlocked the door, lighted his pipe, and strolled out upon the lawn.

He had scarcely gone out of sight when the door of a closet beside the chimney opened, and Venus appeared, with a scared visage.

"Why, Venus! is that you?" exclaimed Astrea, in astonishment.

"Yes, honey, what's lef' of me by de smotheration! De Lor'! dere aint a singly breaf of air in dat dere cupboard when de door am shut," replied the woman, gasping.

"But—how came you in that closet?"

"Debil, I suppose, honey! Nuffin 'tall but de debil! Fact is, I was in de room a-dustin' of de furniture while ole marse was eatin' of his breakfas', an' so I heerd him order you to come in here an' talk wid him when breakfas' was over; an' so de debil tempt me to slip in dis yere closet an' listen, an' see as dere was fair play! an' Lor' knows I was punish enough for it, too! It was hot as an oven, an' not a breaf of fresh air, an' if I had staid dere one minute longer, I done dead with sufferation! 'Twas de debil, chile! nuffin but de debil!"

"No, indeed, Venus! I do not think it was the devil, but rather some good angel that inspired you to go into that closet, and watch to see that there was fair play, as you call it. I hope you heard and saw every thing that passed.

"Ebery singly thing, honey! 'deed did I!"

"I am very glad you did! I am glad to know that I was not now, and never have been, alone in a closed room with that desperate man! But you said that you hid yourself



there to see that there was fair play. And I believe that you were inspired to become my witness. But tell me, Venus, if there had *not* been fair play, what do you think you should have done to help me?"

"Hi, chile! how I know what de debil might o' tempted of me to do? Take up de poker an' knock ole marse down for dead, maybe, an' den get myself' hungged up by de neck for it! Somefin like dat, honey, I knows, 'cause you see de debil was busy wid me!"

"I hope not, Venus; for, as I said before, it was not Satan that was with you, but some good spirit. And now, Venus, since you heard every thing that passed, you heard of the threatened visit to-night?"

"Yes, honey, I heerd it all *good*, 'deed did *I!*—ole scamp!"

"Well, Venus, there is one great favor I shall ask of you!"

"What dat, honey?"

"To stay in my room with me to-night."

"Lor', chile, I done 'ceive my orders contrarywise to dat! Ole marse he say to me dis mornin', he say, 'Wenus, woman, you can go back to your loft to-night; Zora is well enough to 'spense of your services.' So dere, you see, honey!"

"Ah! Venus, I expected something like that! but do, my dear girl, try to elude their vigilance, and conceal yourself in my chamber to-night! You can hide under the bed, or in the wardrobe, or in one of the closets. Will you do this for me?"

"Hi, chile, what good I gwine do you by 'sposing my own life to 'struction?"

"The same good that you have done me by hiding yourself in that cupboard to witness the interview between myself and Mr. Rumford."

"An' what dat, honey? For 'fore my 'Vine Marsers in hebbin, *I* doesn't know!"

"It was this, Venus! Your presence in that closet will



prevent any one from being able to say with truth that I was alone for one single moment, in a closed room, with that man! Think of that, Venus! It was for *that* you were led to conceal yourself in this room."

Well, Lor', I do really 'spose it was, else how I do it?"

"And now, my good woman, I would have you again perform a similar service for me! Conceal yourself in my room to-night, so that I may be able still to prove that I never was alone for one moment, in a closed room, with Rumford!"

"But, hi, honey, who gwine ask you to 'fend an' prove any thing 'bout it?"

"Venus, I have told you before that I am a wife! It is of vital importance to me that my honor should be beyond suspicion. This night may see the last of my life. But whether I live or die, Venus, I want you for a witness that I lived or died a pure woman! *Now* do you understand me?"

"Yes, honey; an' I don't know how it is; I is sartain sure I is a great coward, but I feels as dough I was bounden to 'bey you! I s'pose it is de good spirit as you spoke of."

"That is it, Venus! There are angels all about us, to inspire and aid us, if we are good and true!"

"An' now, honey, what you want me to do in case ole marse should come in an' be obstropolous? Take de poker an' knock him down for dead?"

"No, Venus, I do not even wish you to come out from your hiding-place, or to run any personal risk whatever! I only wish you to remain on the watch to see all that passes, and report of me, living or dead!"

"Yes, honey; but same time if old marse *do* misbehave hisself, an' I sees him, an' de debil *do* get into me, which he is apt to do, I can't be no ways 'sponsible for what I shall do! Knock ole marse brains out wid de poker, maybe, an' den get hang up by de neck till I'm dead! An' dere's an end o' Wenus!"



"There is no danger, my dear Venus. You will be on a holy duty and will be protected from all temptation of the Evil One. And now, my dear woman, you had better not remain too long in my company, lest your presence should be observed, and it should excite suspicion."

"Dat berry true! 'Sides which I got to do ole marse's room, blame him!" said Venus, as she immediately left the parlor to perform this duty.

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## CHAPTER XLV.

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

Bring flowers, young flowers, for the festal board,  
To wreath the cup ere the wine is poured;  
Bring flowers, they are springing in wood and vale;  
Their breath floats out on the southern gale;  
And the touch of the sunbeam hath waked the rose,  
To deck the wall where the bright wine flows!—*Felicia Hemans*

ASTREA had no duties to perform. She had not even the woman's little solace, a work-box! The reader knows that all her personal effects had been left behind when she was abducted from the isle. And since that, she had had no opportunity, even had she possessed the desire, to procure working materials. There were books lying about on the parlor tables; but they were of that showy sort whose chief attraction lies in their gaudy bindings. Astrea, therefore, had no means of occupying herself, even had her mind not been so deeply *pre-occupied* by the terrors of her impending fate.

She wandered restlessly about the room. She went to the front windows and looked out. They commanded a sunny southern prospect of green savannas interspersed with groves of trees, and bounded on the distant horizon



by the cypress swamp. It was the same country she had passed in her flight.

Weary of this, she left the parlor and went into her own room, which she found already made tidy by the nimble fingers of Venus. She had no means of locking herself in, for the keys had all been withdrawn from the locks. She sat down beside one of the back windows and looked out. There was nothing to be seen from it but the kitchen buildings, the garden, the bleaching ground, and the poultry yard. A great smoke was ascending from the kitchen chimney, as if preparations for dinner were already going on. Through the open door she saw old Cybele moving busily about among pots and pans. In the kitchen garden old Saturn was going around with a basket, gathering vegetables. In the poultry yard she saw Venus in a very common act of domestic treachery and slaughter—namely, with a little basket of corn in her hands, calling, “Chicky! chicky! chicky!” and while the trustful creatures flew around her and even alighted on her shoulders, seizing such as she preferred for the pot and incontinently wringing their necks. Astrea turned from this sickening sight to the more agreeable prospect of the bleaching green, where a half a dozen negro girls in bright turbans were engaged in spreading out newly washed linen.

Listlessly enough, Astrea watched these various domestic offices for a while, and then, in the restlessness of her spirit, she left the room and walked out of the front door upon the front lawn.

The moment she appeared, Rumford, who was walking up and down smoking, took the pipe from his mouth, and gave a peculiar whistle that brought his bloodhounds bounding to his side.

He took them and led them straight up to Astrea, making them snuff her clothing, and then saying:

“Good boys! pretty pups! *watch her! watch her!*”

The dogs looked up intelligently and wagged their tails.



"And now, Zora," said Rumford, turning to his victim, "if you should be meditating another mad flight, let me tell you that it will be utterly impossible for you to accomplish your design. These dogs will not permit you to leave the premises. I would rather trust your safe-keeping to them, than to an army of jailers. They are incorruptible guardians, and not to be bribed, coaxed, or frightened from their trust! So look out for yourself, my girl, for if you so much as attempt to escape, they will be at your throat! And if I should not happen to be at hand to call them off, they may do you a serious mischief! So take care how you even walk upon the lawn. When you are tamed, my wild deer, and I can place confidence in you, then I will teach the dogs a different lesson and give you a larger liberty."

"I have no intention to escape in the way you think, Mr. Rumford! My fate is in the hands of God, who will deliver me from the spoiler!" said Astrea with grave dignity, as she retreated into the house.

She returned to her own room and sat down again at the window. Every thing in the background was going on as before; the kitchen chimney still smoking furiously; old Cybele moving about among her pots and pans; Saturn delving in the garden; the laundry maids busy on the bleaching green, and Venus coming out of the poultry yard with a basket full of new laid eggs in one hand and a bunch of killed chickens in the other. These she carried to the kitchen door, and having given them into the hands of old Cybele, she turned about and went into the garden, where she began gathering loads of flowers. Having filled her large apron as full as it could hold, she returned and entered the house by the back door. She paused at the door of Astrea's chamber, and looking in, said:

"What you think, honey?"

"What?" demanded Astrea.

"Ole marse gwine hab a roun' dozen ob gemmen to dine long o' him to-day! a roun' dozen! An' he nebber tell



nobody nuffin 'bout it 'till arter breakfas' dis mornin', an' 'deed arter he come out from talkin' to you! Ole Aunt Cybele is mos' druv to her wits ends! So much to do an' so little time to do it in! But dat is jes' ole marse! he neber takes a 'sideration on to nobody's feelin's 'cept his own! An' ole Aunt Cybele she say how he's eberlastin' a gwine on jes so! allus a dinin' out or havin' gemmen to dine 'long o' him! an' a eatin', an' a drinkin', an' a stuffin', an' a boozin' all de blessed night! But I know what gwine be de end ob it all! He get an appleplexxy fit! an' dat will be de end o' *he*! I see it all right afore me!"

"What are you going to do with all those roses, Venus? They are very sweet," said Astrea, who dearly loved flowers.

"Hi, honey, ornamentate de dinin'-room an' parlor wid 'em—which I must go an' do it immediate, 'cause arter I done dat, I got de china an' cut glass an' silver to see to, an' de table to set! De lors! hurryin' a body up so, till dey don't know whedder dey stan's on dere heads or dere heels!" said Venus, gathering up the corners of her flower-laden apron and preparing to go.

"Let me help you, Venus. It will be a relief to me to do something to while away this tedious day, and I used to take pleasure in arranging flowers. I will arrange them all for you, if you please, and then you can go at something else," said Astrea, kindly.

"Well, honey, if you like for to do it, sure I'm bery thankful to you; an' 'haps it may 'muse your mind, too," replied Venus, gratefully.

Astrea immediately arose and accompanied Venus to the dining-room, where the load of flowers was emptied out upon the table, and where a pair of scissors, a pitcher of water, and a dozen or so of vases were placed.

Astrea was soon congenially engaged in clipping and dressing the flowers, and filling the vases. And in arranging harmoniously tea-roses, heliotropes, cape-jasmines, gera-



niums, and other beautiful and fragrant flowers, Astrea almost forgot her miseries. Two hours passed in this way, and when Astrea had placed the floral vases upon the chimney-pieces, and the tables of the dining-room and parlor, poor, simple Venus was lost in admiration, which she vented as follows:

"Well, chile! I has heerd tell ob de flower angels, an' you mus' be one o' dem!"

Astrea was betrayed into a smile at this enthusiastic compliment.

"And now, Venus, as I find strength in being employed, I will assist you in arranging the dinner-table," she said.

"Which I accepts your help, grateful, honey, 'count o' your ex'lent taste! For dough I hates ole marse worse dan I do rank p'ison, still I wants to hab ebery ting done in a s'perior style, for de credit o' us colored people long o' de strange gem'n."

Astrea, with a cheerfulness that surprised herself, went to work, and soon the dinner table was splendidly set forth, with its Sévres china service, its Bohemian glass tumblers, goblets, and decanters, and its silver-gilt cutlery and spoons. A large and tasteful bouquet of fragrant flowers occupied the centre of the board.

The admiration of Venus arose to ecstasy. She fairly clapped her hands and crowed, saying:

"Well, I neber see nuffin more eleganter dan dat, in all my born days, neber! An' it's all in de way you've 'range it, honey! Won't ole marse be 'stonish? dat's all!"

"Oh, Venus, don't name that evil man to me, when I would so gladly forget his existence," said Astrea, wildly.

"Well, no more I won't, honey! Lors knows, I aint no more fond o' talkin' of him, nor you are of hearin' of him, so nuff said."

"And now, Venus, I have done all I can for the present. When the dinner is ready to be served, I will come and show you how to arrange the first course properly. After



that you know I cannot make my appearance, as the gentlemen will be in the dining-room. I hope that Mr. Rumford will not expect my attendance, for if he does, I certainly shall not come!"

"Oh, Lor', honey, you needn't be one bit feared. I tought o' dat myself, an' so I ax ole Aunt Cybele, an' she tell me how ole marse neber let any of de women folks wait on de table when he has gem'en to dinner; but allus makes Sam wait. An' specially Aunt Cybele say he would no more let *you* come in de sight o' de gem'en dan he would show a precious treasure to a gang of thieves. So you needn't be at all feared for yourself, chile; you's all right dere!" said Venus, confidently.

"Thank heaven for that," said Astrea; "I shall have some precious hours of privacy! But oh, Venus, to-night! to-night! you will not fail me?"

"Hi', chile, how I gwine fail you? I nebber fail any body in all my life, neber! an' taint likely as I'll begin wid you! 'Sides which, honey, you jes keep a stiff upper-lip! Dis dinner-party make it all de better for you! I said so, soon as I heerd tell of it. I say to myself—'Thank de Lord! in de 'fusion I can slip away, an' hide myself in de chile's room, an' nobody 'quire for me! An' den ag'in ole marse will be drinkin' and boozin' till mornin' long o' de gem'en, an' dey'll be tipsy togeder, an' so ole marse he'll forget all 'bout de chile! Dere, now, don't you see de 'vantage, honey?"

"I think you may be right, Venus; I hope to heaven you may be! One day more of respite would be a great blessing to me."

"Yes, honey, so it would! An' now you go right straight in your own room, an' sit down an' rest yourself while I goes an' get you something to eat. Lors knows, old Aunt Cybele, nor me neider, don't mean to let *you* starve, because ole marse gwine to hab a high-jim-be-lung dinner party, an' I tell him so *good!*"



Astrea went to her own room, where Venus soon brought her a delicate luncheon.

The afternoon wore away.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE MIDNIGHT REVELLERS.

“Ring, joyous chords—ring forth again!  
 A swifter still, and a wilder strain!  
 But *thou*, though a reckless mien be thine,  
 And thy cup be crowned with the foaming wine,  
 By the fitful bursts of thy laughter loud,  
 By thine eye’s quick flash through its troubled cloud,  
 I know thee!—it is but the wakeful fear  
 Of a haunted bosom, that brings thee here!  
 I know thee! thou fearest the solemn night!  
 With her piercing stars and her deep wind’s might!  
 There’s a tone in her voice that thou fain wouldst shun,  
 For it asks what the secret soul hath done!  
 And thou!—there’s a weight on thine!—away!  
                     Back to thy room and pray!”

ABOUT six o’clock in the evening the guests of Rumford began to arrive.

At seven dinner was placed upon the table.

Astrea went, as she had promised, to assist Venus in arranging the first course, and then she retired for the evening to her own chamber, where Venus took care to bring her tea in due season.

“An’ now, honey, you an’ me can sit down an’ be comfortable togeder the res’ o’ de ebenin’. Ole Aunt Cybele, she don’t know nuffin ’tall ’bout me bein’ ordered to go back to de lof’ to-night, so she won’t ax arter me. An’ ole marse too busy; he an’ de oder beasts just gone to dere feed,” said Venus, as, after having taken away the tea service, she dragged in her mattress, and began to spread it out underneath Astrea’s bedstead.

“Poor Venus, you’ll be half smothered under there,” said Astrea.



"Not me, honey! Dere's a good, cool draught; 'sides which, long as you gwine to keep de candle burnin, it will be shady under dere, an' keep off de 'squitoses, which dem little debbils is de torment o' my life, an' makes me 'mit more sin in cussin' an swearin' to myself at night dan any thing else in dis worl'."

"Well, my good woman, suit yourself! At least, you will be out of sight there."

"Honey," said Venus, coming out from under the bed, and drawing mysteriously near to Astrea, "honey, what you think?"

"I don't know! What is it?"

"Dere's *thirteen* sinners set down to dat dinner table."

"Well, you told me there was a round dozen invited. Of course, Mr. Rumford makes the thirteenth."

"Yes; but, chile, take a 'sideration on to it! *thirteen* sinners set down to one dinner table!"

"Well, what of that? That is not a very large dinner party."

"But *thirteen*, honey; 'sider dat!"

"Well, I do; what of it?"

"Lors, chile, how your edication has been neglected in some things, to be sure! Now, I dessay as you've larned a heap o' music, an' paintin', an' dancin', an' singin', an' dat! but you has nebber larned what 'cerns you more to know."

"I certainly do not know what you mean, Venus."

"De lors, chile, don't you know as when *thirteen* sinners sits down to one table, one of the sinners is sartain sure to go to de debil afore *thirteen* days is over dere heads?" said Venus, in a low, mysterious whisper.

"No, I never knew that. It is only a superstition, Venus," replied Astrea.

"Yes, honey, I dessay it's a superstriction; but it's *truth*, for all dat! I nebber knew it to fail. No more did Aunt Cybele, or Uncle Saturn, ole as dey bofe is—which dey said



it demselves dis blessed ebenin'. An' now you look out, honey! 'fore a fortnight is over our heads, an' dat is *fourteen* days, we all hears of a death! An' it gwine to be one o' dem dere gem'en as is a sittin' boozin' at dat dere table! Maybe ole marse, for aught I know; an' 'deed if it was, 'taint Wenus as would go ravin' 'stracted crazy wid grief for his loss; I tell you dat good."

"They are very noisy," said Astrea, as the sound of their revelry met her ear.

"Lors, chile, dat ain't nuffin' 'tall. Not as *I* knows any thing about it; but ole Aunt Cybele say, wait till de cloth is drawn an' de wine put on de table, will you? Den you think ole Nick an' all his imps done broke loose! Leastways, so ole Aunt Cybele say, an' she ought to know. Which it's my belief as dat is de reason why ole marse nebber married, 'cause, you see, he knew bery well how no wife would eber put up long of such high-jim-be-lung goings on in de house! Listen to dat now!" said Venus, indignantly, as the sound of wild revelry rolled in upon their ears.

Astrea felt shocked and outraged.

As the evening passed on, the orgies grew higher and more furious. From loud talking and boisterous laughter, they soon reached improper jests, and anecdotes, and bacchanalian songs of a character qutie unfit for woman's ears.

"Now, jes listen to dat dere chorus, honey! Aint dat 'nough to make any decent body go run dere head right into de ashes?" said Venus.

"I am not listening, Venus, as I prefer not to hear such ribaldry," replied Astrea, in a tone of rebuke that silenced Venus for the time.

It drew near midnight and still the orgies gave no intimation of subsiding.

"I gwine try to fasten up dis yere room; 'deed is I; 'cause I done got sleepy, an' dere's no tellin' where dem dere debbils wander to when dey get blind drunk; dey



won't know dis room door from de front door or de back door, an' dey'll be as like to stumble into here as any other place," said Venus, as she looked about for some means of securing the room against intrusion. But she had no better success than Astrea had upon a previous occasion.

"Well! I do think how dis is a downright barbarious 'trivance of ole Nick hisself! Ebery key took out'n de locks, an' no bolt on de doors, an' all de doors swingin' outward, so you can't even pile up any thing agin 'em to keep 'em fast!" exclaimed Venus, in a rage.

"My good woman, if you are tired just close the doors and go to sleep. I shall sit in this chair and watch through the night. I could not in any case trust myself to sleep through this night," said Astrea, kindly.

"Well, honey, it do seem funnelly selfish in me for to go to sleep an' leave you a sittin' up by yourself; leastways it would seem so if I could help of it, which I couldn't to save my life! An' when de sleep do come on me I can no more keep my eyes open dan nuffin at all; an' I couldn't if de house was a-fire," said Venus, opening her wide mouth in an awful yawn that exhibited a deep red chasm terrible to contemplate.

"It is a very pardonable weakness, Venus; pray yield to it at once," said Astrea, gently.

"'Deed I gwine to, honey!" answered the woman, kneeling down to say her short evening prayer. After which she yawned again fearfully, crept under the bed to her mattress and was soon fast asleep. Waking up, however, at the rolling in of an unusually uproarious chorus, she started, put her head out from under the bed, and said:

"De lors, if I didn't think robbers had broke into de house! An' it aint nuffin 'tall but dem rip'rates a-roarin' of dere songs! Well! I try it once more! An', honey, mind, if you is 'sturbed in de night, or frightened or any thing, an' I is a-sleep, jest you overturn a chair or somethin' an' wake me up, 'cause I sha'n't sleep so bery sound no ways. Well, good-night, honey!"



And so saying, with another tremendous yawn, the woman once more drew in her head, tumbled down upon her mattress, and resigned herself to a sleep too profound to be again disturbed by the most noisy outbreaks of the dining-room orgies.



## CHAPTER XLVII.

### THE DESTROYER.

Fixed was her look and stern her air ;  
Back from her shoulders streamed her hair ;  
The locks that wont her brows to shade,  
Stared up erectly from her head :  
Her figure seemed to rise more high ;  
Her voice despair's wild energy  
Had given a tone of prophecy.—*Scott.*

MEANTIME Astrea sat alone in her chair, counting the weary hours of that fearful night as they passed. Wilder and wilder grew the revels in the dining-room. The hall clock had struck two before the noise began to subside.

Soon after that she heard the guests rise from the table and prepare to depart. She heard the order given for the gentlemens' grooms, who were following, in the kitchen, the example set by their masters in the dining-room, to bring around the horses. And Astrea wondered how, between inebriated masters and tipsy servants the members of that dinner party would ever reach their homes without broken necks. Though experience proves that, contrary to all reasonable probability, they invariably do so.

She heard the tramping of the horses as they were brought around to the hall door ; and the disorderly exit of the gentlemen, as with loud renewal of engagements to similar scenes of excess, and with uproarious adieus, they separated and mounted and rode away—some singly, and



some in parties of two or more, as their roads homeward lay.

When the last guests had departed, she heard Rumford and his man Sam putting out the lights and fastening up the house. Lastly she heard the master dismiss the man through the back door, lock it, and enter his own. She heard him moving about for a little while, and then all was silent.

The house that had so lately been the scene of such high revelry, was now as still as a vault.

Astrea trembled more at the stillness than she had at the orgies.

The visitors, wild as they were, had still been felt as a temporary protection.

Now she was defenceless, but for the possession of the little poniard.

Her room was in semi-darkness, being lighted only by the slender bedroom candle. Like a child, she felt more afraid in the dark. So she softly arose and lighted two large wax candles, that stood in silver candle-sticks upon the dressing-table, hitherto more for ostentation than service.

The room was now in a blaze of light, and Astrea, reassured, softly wheeled her easy chair around until it faced Rumford's room, sat herself down in it, unsheathed her little dagger, and fixed her eyes upon the communicating door with the vigilance of a cat watching a rat hole. She was resolved to die the instant Rumford crossed that threshold, should he indeed venture to intrude upon her privacy. But danger seldom approaches us from the guarded point. It comes, when it comes at all, from some unsuspected quarter.

Thus, while our heroine sat still with the dagger grasped in her hand, and her eyes fixed upon the door, she felt a heavy hand fall upon her shoulder, and a rough voice exclaim :



“What, Zora! actually sitting up and waiting for me, my love! That was very kind!”

It was the hand and the voice of Rumford, who had entered by the door leading into the passage, and stolen upon her from behind.

With a ringing shriek, Astrea sprang to her feet, in her haste overturning her chair, that fell with a loud crash to the floor.

The shriek of Astrea, and the fall of the chair, roused up Venus, who rolled herself about until she got her head under the valance of the foot of the bedstead, from which, had any one stooped low enough to observe, they might have seen her black face, and shining eyes, looking out like a wild beast from its lair.

Astrea had sprang several yards from Rumford, where she stood like a lioness at bay—her form drawn up to its haughtiest height, her eyes blazing defiance, her hand grasping the dagger.

Rumford stood gazing upon her. His face was bloated, his eyes bloodshot, his frame tremulous. He was in that particular stage of intoxication, where a man is still conscious of his acts, though careless of their consequences—in a word, when he is both rational and reckless. He stood staring with stupid admiration upon the beautiful form of Astrea. This new, fierce aspect of her beauty, seemed to add fuel to the fire of his passion.

“Splendid creature! you are worth a million of money! and I’ll marry you to-morrow, in spite of all the laws in the land, if that is the price of your precious love!” he exclaimed, and opening his arms he advanced toward her.

“STOP!” cried Astrea, in a high and ringing tone of command, that arrested him where he stood.

“Come no nearer, on your life and soul! But look at me and listen to me from where you now stand! You see this dagger, where I have placed its point against my own throat, just over the carotid artery; my hand is nerved to drive i-



to its hilt ! Come, then, but one step nearer, and I drop dead, slain by my own act !”

Rumford stared at her, appalled, and yet admiringly. He felt well assured that she uttered no vain threat. He saw in that proudly erect form, on that imperious brow, firm lips, and flashing eyes, a resolution impossible to defy.

His first impulse was to throw himself upon her, disarm her, and have her at his mercy. But he saw that she still watched him too closely ; that his first step toward such an act must be instantly fatal to her. He could therefore only seek to disarm her vigilance. So, instead of advancing toward her, he retreated, and began to walk slowly up and down the room as he answered :

“ Nonsense, Zora ! what is the use of your flying out in that ferocious manner ? Have I done you any wrong ? Have I offered you any violence ?”

“ You have invaded the sanctity of my private apartment, sir ! and I order you to leave it at once !” commanded Astrea.

“ Stuff, girl ! that is not the way in which you should speak to your master, and I *am* your master, though quite willing to become your slave. I entered your room because I had a right to do so ; and for the kindly purpose of having some friendly conversation with you.”

“ At three o’clock in the morning, sir !” exclaimed Astrea, with angry scorn.

“ Why not ; I was up and dressed, and so were you ! I saw that through the keyhole of that communicating door. Deuse take it, how you watched that door, Zora ! One would have thought you expected me !”

“ And you looked in upon my privacy through a keyhole ! Oh, base, though not baser than all your other conduct ! And so that was the reason you entered by the passage door and stole upon me from behind !”

“ Exactly, my girl, and to give you a little pleasant surprise !”



"Then leave my room this instant, sir! Every moment that you remain in it is an additional insult! Why do you not obey me?"

"Because it is not the master's place to obey the slave, my girl."

"I am no slave! I have told you who and what I am, and I need not repeat the story here! You disbelieve, or you affect to disbelieve my statement. But that shall not make me forget or abandon my position for one moment! Once more I command you to leave me!"

"Bosh, Zora! Your story, as you call it, is all moon-struck madness! As to leaving you, I shall do it when I please. I shall not harm you by walking about here while I talk to you for a few moments, although you have put yourself into such a belligerent attitude toward me. And why, indeed, should you have done so? Hang it, girl, do you think I am a beast, or a devil—or a mixture of the two—to offer any rudeness to a woman, even though she were my own? No, Zora, do not be afraid of me, girl. I came in here to-night to tell you that your words this morning made some impression upon my mind. They were brave, true, good words. I feel that I am an old man drawing near the end of my career. I feel that I should reform a life that has been rather wild. This evening, the conduct of my guests filled me with disgust at the habits in which I myself have been too much accustomed to indulge. So, when they were gone, I resolved to come to you and say what I am now about to say! I love you, Zora! You have awakened in my heart a pure affection, and a profound esteem, that no woman has ever yet been able to call forth. And, quadroon as you are—for you are much too light to be a mulatto, as was set down in the bill of sale—I will make you my wife to-morrow! It is true that the laws of this State would not recognize such a marriage, but we can cross into a State where they do. And, of course, I will emancipate you at once. Come, my dear Zora! what do you say to that?"



"Sir," replied Astrea, unconsciously lowering her dagger, "I thank you for your preference! and for what, to you at least, must seem your very generous offer. And I hope that your professions of repentance are sincere, and that your reformation may be complete. But with that I can have nothing to do, as you must be aware that I cannot accept your proposal."

"What, Zora! you actually reject the elevation I offer you—that of a free woman and a wife?" inquired Rumford, in seemingly sorrowful surprise, as he drew a little nearer to her in his walk.

"Ah, sir, why should I reiterate a statement that you refuse to credit? I have already said that I am a wedded wife!"

"This is most strange!" said Rumford, in apparent perplexity, as he walked backward and forward in the room. "Your adherence to this story is most wonderful. That, and the perfect consistency of your statements, is truly marvellous, and shakes my faith in the tale told me by Merrick, and almost tempts me to believe your own account of yourself to be the true one."

And as he finished these words, he drew nearer than ever to Astrea.

"Oh, sir, believe it; believe it; or rather test its truth in the way that I suggested to you. Write to my friends, Mr. Rumford!" implored Astrea, completely thrown off her guard.

"I will do so, Zora, or rather Mrs. Greville, as I shall henceforth call you, and cause you to be respected until the arrival of your friends. I will do so to-morrow," said Rumford, standing beside her.

"And now, sir, since you acknowledge my rank and position, may I request you to withdraw from my room! And oh! take with you my most sincere and earnest thanks, and the assurance that my friends will richly repay you for all losses that you have suffered on my account," said Astrea, earnestly.



"Certainly, Mrs. Greville!" said Rumford. And in an instant he had thrown his arms around her, pinioned *her* arms in his embrace, and wrested the dagger from her hand!

Having done this, he retreated to the wall, leaned against it, and laughed aloud!

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho!" he shouted, leaning back, and pointing his finger derisively at Astrea. "Your very humble servant, Mrs. Fulke Greville! How are your health and spirits at this moment, madam? How is the gallant colonel, your husband? Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Oh! I was impressed with your words, was I? Oh! I offered you marriage, did I? Oh! I was going to reform my life, was I? And, ah! I was going to write to your friends, and restore you to your rank, was I? Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! Oh, Zora! what a gull you were to think that I could be outwitted or defied by a child like you! What do you think of your prospects now? Do you know what they are? I'll tell you what mine are—to pass the remainder of the night in this room, in spite of all earth and heaven—and to take a kiss to begin with, my dear! That will be all the more piquant, snatched like a brand from the burning of your wrath!" he said, as he advanced toward his intended victim.

But a marvellous change had passed over Astrea! Her form seemed to dilate, expand, and rise until she stood a majestic presence in the room; her head was thrown back, her eyes were starting, her arm was elevated on high with a gesture of supreme authority. An awful glory lighted up her face! In her terrible beauty, she seemed a Cassandra about to prophecy! a Pythoness sent to utter the oracles of a god! or an Angel of Wrath pronouncing the doom of a world!

"PAUSE!" she commanded, as Rumford advanced toward her.

And, as if compelled by some all-potent spell, the planter paused.



"You have profaned the sanctity of a maiden bride's bed-chamber! You have used treachery and force to disarm her of the only means she possessed of defending her purity. You think you have her at your mercy! You mistake! *I have you at mine!*"

"That voice! that voice!" exclaimed the planter, in horror.

"You have been tried, judged, condemned! And now, in the name of all outraged womanhood—I command you—*die!*"

Affected by some fearful agitation, the planter stood and trembled.

"In the name of all pure spirits that watch over chaste women—I command you—DIE!"

Rumford rocked upon his feet and grasped at the wall for support.

"In the name of the awful Judge of quick and dead, whose laws you have defiled, whose name you have blasphemed—I command you—DIE!"

And the planter reeled and fell at the feet of the virgin bride—Astrea.

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## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE FISH BOY AGAIN.

Look in his eyes and thou wilt find  
 A sadness in their beam,  
 Like the pensive shade that willows cast  
 On a sky-reflecting stream.  
 There's a sweetness of sound in his talking tones  
 Betraying the gentle spirit he owns.—*Eliza Cook.*

WE must now take up the fortunes of Welby Dunbar, and explain the reason of the re-assumption of his boyhood's name.

To do this we must make a brief retrospect of a few years.



When Mrs. Greville, accompanied by her daughter and her supposed step-son, left America for Europe, she made her arrangements for a lengthened absence.

On her arrival in England, she engaged a highly accomplished governess for her daughter, a very learned tutor for her son, necessary attendants for herself, and with this large party left again for the Continent.

She extended her travels not only through Europe, but over Asia and into Africa.

At the end of three years she returned with her party to England, placed her son at the University of Cambridge, where, at his own desire, he was to study the profession of law, and then proceeded to Paris, where she took up her residence, and engaged the best masters to complete the education of her daughter.

Welby Dunbar, or Mr. Greville, as he still continued to be called, entered the University with the resolution to make the very best use of his opportunities while there. And he applied himself to study with such unremitted assiduity as to graduate with great honor before he had reached the supposed age of twenty-one (for poor Welby had no accurate knowledge of what his own age really was); but of course he had entered upon the enjoyment of Fulke Greville's birthday as he did upon all that young gentleman's other possessions and privileges—advantages, which Welby did not intend to have forced upon him for one hour beyond that in which he should reach his supposed majority, and be free to cast them off.

Although he had graduated, he was still, by Mrs. Greville's desire, continuing his legal studies at Cambridge, in the office of a distinguished lawyer there, and waiting only for his next birthday to declare his identity and independence, when he received a letter from that lady, enclosing a check for a thousand pounds, and desiring him to occupy and improve himself by visiting all the principal



law courts in Europe, while she and her daughter made another expedition to the East.

You see that Mrs. Greville, except in the state and luxury of her mode of travel, was another Madame Ida Pfeiffer.

As soon as Welby got this letter, as he wanted but two days of his supposed majority, he set out immediately for Paris, hoping to intercept Mrs. Greville's journey, and resolving to make his disclosure.

But when he reached Paris he found that the lady and her party had already left for Marseilles. He lost no time in hurrying down to that port, where upon his arrival he learned that the Oriental Steam Packet Company's ship Falcon had sailed an hour before for Alexandria, having on board Mrs. Greville, daughter, and two servants. No other packet for that port would sail for a month. To overtake them was now impossible.

Therefore there was nothing farther for Welby to do but to take the goods Fate forced upon him and obey his patroness. He *did* visit all the principal law courts on the Continent, and if the truth must be told, found himself rather confused than improved by their conflicting practices. He heard occasionally from Mrs. Greville and Lois, who were extending their travels as far as they could possibly penetrate with safety into the interior of Africa. And he wrote whenever there seemed the shadow of a chance that they would get his letter.

So passed two years and a half, at the end of which time, having sufficiently mystified himself with the science of justice as administered in the various law courts of Europe, Welby Dunbar fixed himself for the winter in Paris. He had scarcely settled himself in his lodgings, when he received a letter from Mrs. Greville, dated Calcutta, giving him an account of her travels through Asia, and enclosing an order on her London banker for another thousand pounds; but fixing no time for her return. He



answered this letter; but still reserved his disclosure for a personal interview.

However, in settling himself in Paris, he re-assumed his own name. He left his card with the American Minister and with other resident Americans. And without the advantage of a single letter of introduction (for while many would have introduced him as Mr. Greville, who could have presented him as Mr. Dunbar?), by the simple force of his personal worth he gained many good friends and even a considerable office practice. It was his intention, on returning to America, to apply for admission to the New York bar. There was but one contretemps that Welby dreaded—and that was an embarrassing meeting with some one who had known him as Mr. Greville. He resolved in such a case to adopt the only remedy—a full explanation of his singular position. But there was little likelihood of such an event, as during his residence at Cambridge, he had avoided forming acquaintances, and afterward, in going the rounds of the law courts of Europe, he had travelled incog.

Early in the spring, to his great astonishment, Welby Dunbar received a letter from his patroness dated New York, telling him that she had formed the acquaintance of an American family at Calcutta, who were on the eve of sailing for their native country, and that she suddenly formed the resolution of joining their party and returning with them—also that she had written to him, giving him all this news, on the eve of sailing; but fearing that he had not got *that* letter, as the mails were so uncertain, she repeated the intelligence here. She concluded by entreating her dear son to join her as soon as possible in New York.

Welby Dunbar wished nothing better than this! He engaged his passage in the first steamer that was to sail from Havre, and immediately commenced preparations for his voyage. It was while employed in this agreeable task that he learned the American Minister had been recalled home and would return in the same steamer with himself.



And the next day after receiving this intelligence, he was introduced to Madame de Glacie, as the reader already knows, and undertook to aid her with his professional services in her search after her daughter.

The whole party sailed together from Havre, and in due time arrived safely at New York, or rather at the landing at Jersey City.

There was an express train to start for Washington in an hour, and no other one until the next morning. The impatience of Madame de Glacie to see her daughter, would upon no account admit of twelve hours' delay. So without allowing her young attorney time to call and see his friends, or even to cross over to the city, she, and in fact the whole party, took the express to Washington that afternoon.

We have already seen how lucky they were in meeting Captain Fuljoy at their hotel in Washington; how prompt they were in hurrying down to Fuljoy's island; and how overwhelmed with consternation, sorrow, and despair at the intelligence that met them there.

You have heard how Madame de Glacie, the first to recover from the terrible shock, and to doubt the fact of the murder of Astrea, resolved to remain and prosecute her investigations in the neighborhood of the isle, while she sent her young attorney to advertise the missing girl through all the principal cities of the Union.

Young Welby Dunbar went first to New York. One city was as good as another to begin with, and he was really very impatient to see Mrs. Greville and Miss Howard, make his important disclosure to them, and learn upon what terms he was thenceforth to remain with them.

This question gave him, and had always given him, the greatest uneasiness; it was the one trouble of his young life! And now that the problem approached its solution, this uneasiness was augmented to the most poignant anxiety! He loved, admired and honored Mrs. Greville, and



was very proud of her as his adopted mother. It would be terrible to him to lose her affection and esteem! But Lois Howard was the star of his life! He loved her with all the passion of his soul! She was also his betrothed bride! To lose her! He could conceive no possibility of a future life on this planet for himself, after such a crushing calamity.

If he were to suppress this disclosure, only for a few weeks, he might marry her, and make her and her fortune irrevocably his own!

If he should make the disclosure, he might, and probably would, lose her forever!

Yet it was his duty to make it, and so, come what would of calamity, it must be made!

In the midst of his keen personal anxiety, he did not forget the business of Madame de Glacie. He had arrived in the city late at night. But immediately after breakfast the next morning, he went out and distributed among the daily papers, a carefully worded advertisement, offering a large reward for reliable information regarding the missing girl. This duty occupied him all the morning. At noon he returned to his hotel, took a slight repast, made a fresh toilet, and set out to call upon Mrs. Greville, at the earliest hour that lady was expected to be visible.

He soon reached Madison Square, and paused in sorrowful and anxious contemplation before the old, familiar house. With how many strange memories of pain and pleasure was it associated! Here he had been forcibly dragged from a state of utter poverty and destitution to one of wealth and luxury! Here he had found a mother. Here he had first met Lois Howard! But now! how now? Should he cross that threshold, make his intended revelation, and leave the house, would he ever be permitted to return to it again?

These were questions he scarcely dared to ask himself! He hurried up to the door and knocked, and he wondered, while he waited for admission, if any of the old servants



who had known him in his boyhood as Fulke Greville, would appear to add to his embarrassment. He need not have been uneasy. Long years of absence on the part of the family, had effected an entire change in the domestic service of Mrs. Greville's establishment. Not one of the old servants remained. A stranger came to the door.

Welby Dunbar handed his card.

The footman showed him into that well remembered little reception parlor into which, as a boy, he had once been dragged. It had undergone a thorough renovation, and instead of gold colored curtains, sofas, and chairs, it was furnished with pale blue.

Welby had scarcely noticed these changes when the door opened, and a lady in an elegant morning dress of some fine oriental fabric, white and sprigged with gold, sailed majestically into the room. It was Mrs. Greeville, looking as beautiful and stately, as fresh and blooming as she had looked so many years ago. Time seemed to have but little power over her majestic beauty.

As soon as her eyes fell upon young Dunbar, a ray of surprise and joy lighted up her face, and she hastened toward him with extended hands, exclaiming :

"Fulke! Oh, my son! What a happy surprise! Why, when did you arrive? You must have left Paris immediately after the receipt of my letter! Did you get my letter from Calcutta?"

Welby could not answer all her questions in a breath, as she had asked them, so he confined his attention to the last, and replied, as he received and returned her embrace :

"I missed your letter from Calcutta; but I received the last from New York. And I left Paris within a few days after its receipt."

"You good boy! but when did you arrive? There has been no steamer in for three or four days! I know it, because I have been looking out for a letter from you, not hoping to see you so soon in person?" said the lady, in a



happy tone, as she sank gracefully into an easy chair, and motioned Welby to take another one near her.

Welby obeyed, and when he was seated, replied :

“I arrived by the ‘Phoenix’, a week ago——”

“A week ago, you unnatural boy ; and you have not called to see me, or rather come home to me before to-day ? What have you been doing with yourself all this while ?” inquired the lady, half angrily.

“I came over with a distinguished client, whose business was of such eminent importance that it admitted of not one hour’s delay. We did not even cross to the city, but proceeded at once from the custom-house to the station, and took the express train to Washington, where we arrived late the same night. I have been kept busily engaged upon the affairs of my client ever since my arrival in America. It was but last night I returned to New York, and this morning I have seized the first free moment to pay my respects to you !” said Welby.

“Fulke ! once for all, I tell you, I do not like your delving so hard at the drudgery of your profession ! There is no earthly necessity for it ! You will have quite enough to live upon without it ! Not, observe, that I find fault with your having a profession ! Every man of talent ought to have one ! But I will not have you delve at its drudgery like a pettifogger earning his daily bread ! I would like to see you an eminent lawyer like William Wirt or Daniel Webster !”

Welby smiled, as he answered :

“But, my dearest Madam, do you imagine that either William Wirt or Daniel Webster reached the eminence they attained without a good deal of wearisome climbing ; in other words, a good deal of delving at the drudgery of their profession, as you would call it ? Believe me, Madam, there is no royal road to eminence in any of the learned professions. For every aspirant whatever there is the same rugged and toilsome ascent ! And to very few is given the power to reach the summit !”



"You may be right, Fulke! But I do not see how dancing attendance upon a client, like a lacquey upon his lord, is going to make you attorney-general, however!" said the lady, with a gay laugh.

"Where is Lois? She has not made her appearance yet! Does she know that I am here? Or is she not well?" inquired Welby, anxiously.

"Lois is gone to our jeweller to see about the setting of some fine emeralds I collected in the East. She left the house a few moments before you came, and so, of course, could not know of your arrival. As for her being well, she has never had an hour's illness in her life, and was never in finer health than at present! She will be delighted to see you, my dear Fulke! And, by the way, I hope it will not be long before you and Lois agree to fix upon your marriage day. It is quite time to consummate your engagement! She is twenty-three, you very nearly twenty-five! You need not wait until you get into a handsome practice, for if you do, she will be gray and you will be bald before your marriage. There is no necessity for waiting at all! With her handsome patrimony, and the fortune I am able to bestow upon you, you may marry at once, and live in good style."

Welby lowered his eyes in sorrowful thought. The words of Mrs. Greville brought back to him the memory of that painful revelation which he felt it his duty to make to her; which, when made, might change all his future prospects, deprive him of Lois, and ruin his happiness forever!

In the warmth of Mrs. Greville's welcome to him, he had almost lost sight of the necessity of making this revelation! Now he was reminded of it. In the midst of his distress, also, one thing perplexed him—he had sent up to her his card, bearing his true name—"WELBY DUNBAR"—engraved upon it.

She had come down twirling that card in her hand, and she was even now twirling it in her hand; and yet, without



any reference whatever to the other name, she continued to address him as Fulke Greville, and to treat him as her son.

There must be some mistake ; perhaps, after all, the bit of enamelled pasteboard she twirled was not that which he had sent up, he thought. So he resolved to inquire.

“Madam, did the servant take up my card to you?”

“No! certainly not! nor even your name! I was altogether unprepared to meet you when I entered this room! I came in to see——Oh, dear me, that reminds me! How very rude of me! But, really, your unexpected appearance drove every thing else out of my head!” said Mrs. Greville, getting up and ringing the bell.

“To what do you refer, Madam?” inquired the young man, anxiously.

“Why, to a great breach of politeness of which I have been guilty! The fact is, that, just before I came downstairs, I received this card, sent up by a gentleman who was waiting to see me!—a Mr.—Mr. Wesley—Welby—Durham, no, Dunbar! Welby Dunbar!” said the lady, referring to the card in her hand, and then continuing: “I returned word that I would be down in a moment, and I came down and entered this room, expecting to see a stranger, when the sight of you drove every thing else from my memory!”

“Madam,” began Welby, in a sad tone; but before he uttered another word the door opened, and the footman appeared in answer to the bell.

“Ah, John, you have come! Now, where have you shown the gentleman who sent up this card? Into the library? morning parlor? drawing-room, or where? I expected to find him here!”

“Madam,” replied the man, approaching his mistress’s chair and speaking in a low, respectful tone, though with a look of surprise, “he *is* here! there he sits; that is the gentleman as sent up that card!”

“This! why, how stupid you are, John! this is Mr.——”

“Dear Madam!” interposed Welby, suddenly, “send



your servant from the room ! I understand it all now, and I will explain ! But my communication must be for your private ear alone."

"You may go, John," said the lady ; and when the door had closed after the man, she turned to Welby with a face full of curiosity and interest, and inquired :

"Now, Fulke, what is it?"

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

### A STARTLING DISCLOSURE.

He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch,  
To lose or gain it all.—*Montrose.*

"MADAM, I am at this moment happy in the enjoyment of your affection, esteem, and confidence ! The next hour may change all that ! I have a revelation to make to you, which, when made, may banish me from your heart and home forever !"

"In the name of Heaven, Fulke Greville," said the lady, turning deadly pale, "what do you mean ? Have you been led into folly, vice, crime ? Have you done any thing unworthy of the name you bear ? If so, oh ! speak out ! Tell your mother ! Confess to the one being in the world who will never reproach you ! And being penitent, you shall be pardoned, Fulke ! I will not break the bruised reed, even though my own heart should break !"

"No, no, no !" said Welby, with great emotion and emphasis. "I have done none of these things which you fear ! My character and reputation are without reproach, and I am not unworthy to be called your son ! The worst that can be said of me is that I am in a false position !"



"In a false position? You? Explain, Fulke!" said the lady, much relieved, however.

"In the first place, as your servant truly informed you, it was *I* who sent up that card."

"You! But it bears the name of Wesley—Wellesly—Welby Dunbar! Ah! I see! You said that you were in a false position! you send me up another name than your own! Good Heaven, Fulke! you must have been wrongfully accused of some crime, and must be hiding from the police and going under an assumed name—the name that you sent up to me! But could you fancy, my dear boy, that for such a misfortune, *I* could turn against you? *I* could banish you from my heart and home?"

"I fancied nothing but what was most magnanimous of you, dear lady! But you are again mistaken! I have been accused of no crime; I am hiding from no police, and I am going under no assumed name; the name upon that card is the only one upon which I can have any sort of claim, even if I have any rightful claim to that, which is doubtful."

"The name upon this card, the only one to which you have any sort of claim—Fulke! are you mad?"

"Ah, no, Madam! but most sadly sane!" said the young man, with a profound sigh.

"Will you please to explain yourself, then, Fulke! and *clearly*, too; for I pledge you my word, that hitherto, the more you have talked, the deeper this riddle has grown!" said the lady, somewhat impatiently.

"Madam, will you please to look once more at that card and read the name aloud?"

"Welby Dunbar," read the lady, looking up inquiringly.

"Is there nothing familiar in the sound of that name?" asked Welby, impressively.

"Nothing whatever."

"Have you no vague recollection of having heard it before, under somewhat singular and interesting circumstances?"



“Not the slightest in the world.”

“Dear Madam, carry your recollection back several years—back to that winter’s day when I, a poor, forlorn, orphan boy, was dragged into your splendid drawing-room by the three gentlemen who captured me in Canal street.”

“Fulke, yes! I have too much reason to remember that boyish freak of yours! It gave me more anguish than almost any event of my life! But *I*, Fulke, have never once reproached you with it! To have done so, indeed, would have been ungenerous, since all your subsequent conduct has been perfectly irreproachable! So good, so affectionate, so solicitous to please me have you been, my love, that, whereas before you ran away, I only loved you in a conscientious sort of way, as the son of my late husband by his first wife, *since* that, my dear, I have loved you from the bottom of my heart, and for your own personal merits!”

“Oh, that you may continue to regard me for myself alone, lady! dear lady! for that is the only claim I can venture to make upon you.”

“But, my dear Fulke, why have you recalled that long past circumstance to my mind?”

“Madam; dear Mrs. Greville; my more than mother! try to recall in detail the events of that night; recollect the account given you of my capture by the gentlemen who arrested me. Recollect that they told you they found me crying oysters in Canal street; that I resisted their attempts to capture me with all my boyish strength! That I persisted in asserting myself to be an emigrant from England, a fish boy in the service of old Carnes, of Water street, my name Welby Dunbar!”

“I remember that; but what of it? And what freak has made you use that old, false name again?”

“Lady,” said the young man, continuing, without immediately answering her question, “remember, also, that when these gentlemen retired and left me alone with you, I still persisted in asserting that I was not your son; I still re-



sisted the splendid destiny that was forced upon me, but to which I conceived I had no right !”

“I know that you did, Fulke ; but *why* you did it, I cannot imagine, unless it was because your poor father left nothing, and I, who wished to enrich you for his sake, was only your step-mother !”

“No, Madam, it was not that,” said the young man, sorrowfully ; “it was not that ; it was because, in sad truth, I was not what you claimed me to be ; I was not your step-son ; my name was not Fulke Greville ; I was indeed what I declared myself to be—a newly-arrived emigrant from England ; a fish boy in the service of old Carnes, of Water street ; and my name was Welby Dunbar ! I had no means of proving my identity ; the ship by which I came had sailed again ! my emigrant companions had dispersed in every direction. Old Carnes could testify only to the fact that upon a certain day I had come to him for employment. That proved nothing, as any runaway school-boy might have done that for a freak ! So I had no means of proving my identity ! All my unsupported words were disregarded. I bore so striking a resemblance to your missing step-son, whom you had not seen for twelve months, as to seem his counterpart, or himself. I was a minor, in the power of those who believed and asserted themselves to be my legal guardians ! And thus, in despite of all my protestations, I was torn from my humble sphere, and the condition of a gentleman forced upon me—upon *me*, a poor, forlorn, and nameless orphan. I say nameless, lady, for of my own origin I know nothing, not even that my parents bore the name which was first given to me ! But, oh ! lady, do you imagine that, even while protesting against the greatness thrust upon him, the poor fish boy was not much tempted to be silent, and to ‘take the goods the gods provided ?’ He was ! His one dream—poor outcast as he had been—was to rise to the condition of a gentleman by his own exertions ! For that he came to this land of freedom and



equality. For that he would have toiled long years. And when unexpectedly the opportunity of springing at once into that rank was forced upon him, do you not think that he was sorely tempted to embrace it? He was, Mrs. Greville! he was! But the boy, poor in every thing else, was rich in the possession of a pure conscience; that conscience would not permit him to accept a tempting position to which he had no right! He protested against taking it; and even when he knew that his protestations were all in vain, he warned you, when you should find out your mistake, not to brand him as an impostor! And he resolved that during his minority, he would obey his self-styled mother and self-constituted guardians; do all he could to prove himself grateful for their bounty; and make the best use of his opportunities for improvement; but that as soon as he should attain his majority, and be free to act for himself, he would, at any sacrifice of personal feeling or pecuniary prospects, abandon a position to which he had no just right. Lady, I appeal to yourself to judge whether the first section of those resolutions has not been kept? For the rest, I have to inform you, that immediately upon reaching my majority, I re-assumed my boyhood's name. I went to Paris to seek you, with the intention of making the revelation that I have made this day. But you were then far on your journey to the East. My communication was not such a one as could properly be made by letter, or trusted to the uncertainty of the Eastern mails. Thus I was unwillingly compelled to defer it to this long wished personal interview. This, Madam, is the explanation I had to make you. Lady! in all the years of our intimate friendship, you have never known me to vary in the least degree from truth. The statement that I made to you when a boy, I repeat to you now that I am a man. Do you now believe me?"

Mrs. Greville had listened in perfect silence to this explanation, and as gradually the conviction of the truth forced itself upon her mind, she grew paler and paler, until



at last, at its close, she sank back in her chair upon the very verge of swooning. Her lips were mute, her eyes closed, her face as white as death.

On seeing her condition, Welby's feelings entirely overcame him. Throwing himself at her feet, he seized and covered her hands with kisses, exclaiming, in a broken voice:

"Lady! Mrs. Greville! oh, my more than mother! look at me! speak to me! forgive me! I was no willing impostor!"

"Oh! my son! my son! my lost son!" wailed the lady, in a voice so broken by anguish as to be almost inaudible.

"He *is* not lost, dear lady; he is not lost! Whatever becomes of the poor fellow at your feet, your *son* is safe! he is found! And if my resolution to make the disclosure that I have made had required a spur, it would have gained it from the moment that I had certain intelligence of the real Fulke Greville's existence! Lady, listen, and be happy! When he ran away from school, he cast himself upon the protection of his uncle, Captain William Fuljoy—of Fuljoy's Isle—an old retired sea-captain, living on a remote island upon the coast of Maryland. But I believe you know who Captain Fuljoy was. Well, the captain brought him up as his own son; sent him to the University of Virginia, and afterward to West Point, and finally procured him a commission in the regular army. He now holds the rank of a colonel, and though under a temporary cloud, he is universally esteemed as a gentleman of high moral and intellectual excellence. Oh, lady, look up! and while you rejoice in the recovery of your rightful step-son, speak a word of forgiveness—a word of kindness to the poor fellow who has so long and so unwillingly held his rank in society, and his place in your affections!"

"And do you fancy it is of *him* I think? of *him*, the froward, the perverse, the stiff-necked boy who fled from my charge, and has held himself aloof from my knowledge



all these many years? No, no, no—I thought not of him; but of *you*—of *you*, my good! my loving! my true-hearted one! And to think that, after all, you are not my son!” exclaimed the lady, throwing her arms around Welby, dropping her head upon his shoulder, and bursting into a passion of tears.

Neither spoke for a time; but at length the lady lifted her head, and laying both her hands upon the shoulders of Welby, gazed sadly in his face, as she said:

“Oh! I might have known that you were not Fulke Greville. Bearing his perfect form and features as you do, yet your mind is so much higher, your heart so much tenderer, and your spirit so much more refined than ever his were! Oh, my dear boy! it is scarcely half an hour since I told you, that before Fulke Greville ran away from school, I had cherished him from a sense of duty, and as my late husband’s son; but that since *you* came back you had been so changed that I grew to love you for your own personal merits! Ah, Welby! little did I think that the boy who ran away and the boy who was brought back, so exact in personal appearance, so different in character, were different in identity too! And to think that you, so good, so true, so loving, are not my son! Oh, what shall I do! Oh, sorrow! sorrow!” cried Mrs. Greville, bursting anew into tears.

“Lady, dear lady! my mother, my saviour, almost my creator, listen to me! You *have* been a mother to me, you *have* saved me from utter indigence, you *have* made me what I am! But for you I might still have been an oyster-carrier; or, worse than that, in the despair of uncultivated talent and unsatisfied ambition, I might have been a drunkard or a felon! You saved me from all that! You rescued me almost from the gutter! You gave me a home and a mother! You gave me an education and a profession! You have made me a man! And now, oh lady, let me ask you—is not the boy that you have thus loved, thus reared,



and thus established, as near to you, by all that you have done for him, as any step-son could be?"

"Yes, yes, my own dear boy, yes; but still I wish you were my step-son—I wish you bore my name! It is hard, it is distressing to find that you are not what for so many years I held you to be!"

"Mrs. Greville! dear Mrs. Greville! I hope you do not hold me to have been a willing impostor during all these years?" inquired Welby, sadly.

"Impostor! No, my dear! How should you have been? You protested against the position in which we placed you, until you were silenced by authority. You resisted until you were conquered by irresistible force. What, then, could you do but what you *have* done?—wait for your legal majority, when you should be free to act for yourself! My boy, you have acted well throughout, and with a rare wisdom indeed in one so young! And as for my part, I cannot regret the mistake we made, since it rescued an excellent lad from the perils of poverty, and gave me so good a son, and rendered me happy for so many years! You see, my dear, that the effect of the shock your communication gave me is already passing away! I shall get entirely over it presently."

Welby kissed her hands in silence.

"And now let me tell you, Welby! dear Welby! that, though I very much regret that your name is not Greville, yet I cannot let you go! To cease to love you, to cease to take pride in you, to cease to look forward with ambition to your professional career, would be to cease to have a future of my own! To cast you off, would be death! Therefore, dear boy, take what name you will, but rest in my house, my only son and best beloved!"

"Lady! dearest lady——"

"Mother, Welby—I am still your mother."

"Mother, then—angel mother, your magnanimity overpowers me! Nothing—no, nothing—not my whole life's



devotion can ever repay you!" said the young man, in a voice choked with emotion.

"Do you not know that the delight I take in you repays me? It is something, my dear, to have a son like you!"

"Mother, dear mother, there is another, however, who really *has* a son's claim upon you! I must not supplant him!"

"You allude to Colonel Fulke Greville? For the future I can only regard that gentleman as the son of my late husband! Upon me, or my property, he has no legal claim whatever; his father left no property. It is true that I promised him on his death-bed to provide for Fulke as if he were my own son. And I should have kept my promise; but since he withdrew himself from my protection, and threw himself upon that of his uncle; and since he has remained silent for such a great number of years, there can be but little regard for me on his part! Nevertheless, when he marries and settles, I will offer him that portion of property which my affection for his father first prompted me to set aside to accumulate for *him*. But I have much mistaken the haughty spirit of Fulke Greville, if he accepts it!"

Here Welby felt inclined to relate the story of Colonel Greville's marriage, with all its singular circumstances; but rightly judging that the lady had heard exciting news enough for one day, he resolved to defer that second communication to another occasion.

"And now," said Mrs. Greville, "there is another who must be informed of this change of name—Lois!"

At the mention of *her*, the blood rushed in torrents to his face, and then receding, left him pale as marble, while his whole frame shook with emotion.

"Why are you so agitated, my dear? Believe me, Lois will not be so much shocked as I was! The young receive new impressions with so much more ease than the middle-aged."

"Lois! Lois! oh, Madam! how will this revelation affect my relations with Lois?"



“Not at all, I imagine! for though not Fulke Greville, you are still my son! And what is more, *you are still yourself!* And that, my Welby, is, after all, the best praise I can bestow upon you! And if you have not inherited the old time-honored name of Fulke Greville, yet you will do better than that—you will make your own illustrious! Yes, my dear Welby, I am not young; yet I hope to live to see you an eminent lawyer and statesman yet!” said the lady, cheerfully.

“Oh! heaven grant that I may fulfil your expectations, mother! But Lois! how shall I tell Lois, that for so many years I have borne a false name and held a false position!”

“You need not tell her, yourself! You have had pain enough, extreme pain, indeed, in making the communication to me. Leave me to inform Lois! I expect her in every moment! So now retire to your hotel, my son, and order your luggage sent here immediately. I will have your room prepared for your reception. Come home in time to dine with us at eight, and then you will see at a glance, by the reception that Lois will give you, what effect my communication has had upon her, for, in the interim, it will have been made!”

Welby arose and took the lady's kind hand, and pressed it fervently to his lips; but she drew him to her bosom in a warm embrace, and kissed him fondly.

And so Welby left the house he had entered two hours before with so many dreadful misgivings—left it happier than he had ever been in the whole course of his life!—for, as the reader knows, before he had ever seen Mrs. Greville, his boyhood had been made miserable by poverty; and since he had been taken by that lady, his youth had been darkened by a sense of his false position, and burdened with the secret that he knew must be told, yet dreaded to tell. Thus Welby had never known true happiness until now! now the terrible secret was off his breast! now the dreaded revelation had been made, and had not ruined him! had, on



the contrary, only confirmed his position, which was no longer a false one!

He walked to his hotel as though he trod on air! When he reached it, he sent his luggage on at once to Madison square. Then he wrote a letter to Madame de Glacie, telling her of the steps he had already taken toward the discovery of Astrea.

When he had despatched this letter, it was full time for him to keep his appointment at Madison Square. He went thither immediately. He was shown into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Greville and Miss Howard waited to receive him.

Lois looked beautiful in her evening dress of rose-colored glacé silk, trimmed with fine lace, and her blooming face shaded with her sunny, auburn ringlets.

As soon as Welby entered she arose and advanced to meet him, holding out her hand, and saying, in her frank and cordial manner:

"I am so very glad to see you, dear Welby! Heaven bless you, Welby, but did you really fancy that your mere change of name would effect a change in my regard. Why, I think Welby Dunbar quite as pretty a name as Fulke Greville!"

He pressed the hand she gave him, and led her back to her seat, where they were immediately joined by Mrs. Greville.

He was too deeply moved to trust himself as yet to speak. But, happily for the relief of all parties, dinner was served. After so long a separation, this was a joyful reunion. All were happy; but Welby was the happiest of the party. The evening passed pleasantly in music and conversation. Mrs. Greville and Lois told thrilling incidents, and amusing anecdotes of their Eastern travels, and Welby gave an interesting account of his experiences in the law courts of Europe.

Unwilling to separate, they sat up until a very late hour, and even then said "good-night" with reluctance.



In the course of the next few days, Mrs. Greville took care to present Mr. Dunbar to her circle of fashionable acquaintances; her *new* circle; for twelve years had made such a thorough change in the ever-shifting scenes of New York, that upon her return from Europe she found scarcely one of the old set remaining—certainly none that had any distinct remembrance of the lad Welby Dunbar under the name of Fulke Greville.

A handsome office, in an eligible situation, was taken by Mr. Dunbar, and he was soon after admitted to practice at the New York bar.

But, alas! briefs were slow to come in to the handsome and talented young lawyer.

"It is because they do not know your power, my dear Welby! How should they, indeed! But do you take up the cause of the indigent widows and orphans—there is always plenty of them, with real or imaginary wrongs to be redressed; volunteer to act for the poor who cannot pay for counsel, and do it with as much zeal as if you had a thousand dollars as a retaining fee! And that course will at least make you known. And if you do not at first get money, you will get fame! And after that, wealthy clients will flow in upon you faster than you can receive them! I really think poor clients were invented for the special benefit of young lawyers, as poor patients were for young doctors. They can't pay, but they make the skill of their benefactors known, and so help them to a more profitable practice," said Mrs. Greville, one morning, to her son.

Welby felt that this advice was good, and resolved to follow it. But he knew, at the same time, that to gain a lucrative business must be the work of years.

One evening, when he had been home about a fortnight, he found himself alone with Mrs. Greville and Lois, in their pleasant parlor, with no prospect of being interrupted, and seized the opportunity of telling them the strange story of Colonel Greville and Astrea, in all its details, as far as they were known to himself.



Of course, the recital filled his hearers with wonder and compassion.

“That poor, bereaved mother ; how terrible her suspense must be ! So she was the client whose impatience hurried you off to Washington before you could even call upon us, whom you had not seen for three years ! Well, I cannot blame either her or you. Poor lady, I shall write to her a sympathizing letter, and beg her to come on and remain with us while these investigations proceed,” said Mrs. Greville.

And as she was a prompt woman, she wrote at once, and despatched her letter in time to catch the evening mail.

In four days Madame de Glacie’s answer came back, written in a beautiful Italian hand, and filled with the fervent gratitude of a warm Italian heart. But she declined the invitation, upon the ground that she could not leave her aged friend, Captain Fuljoy, or her imprisoned son-in-law, Colonel Greville, both so much afflicted, and so much in need of comfort.”

“Perhaps she is right ; she is happier with them,” said Mrs. Greville ; and the subject was dismissed.

The marriage of Welby Dunbar and Lois Howard was arranged to take place on the first of the coming month. The ceremony was to be performed at ten o’clock in the morning at Grace church. The young couple were to return to a sumptuous wedding breakfast, and immediately afterward set out for a bridal tour to Niagara and the Thousand Isles. They were then to return, and take up their permanent residence with Mrs. Greville. For so that excellent but despotic lady would have it. And the young people liked the plan. Lois was deeply attached to the mother from whom she had never been separated for a day, with the exception of the one sad, homesick year at school. And as for Welby, it would have been difficult for him to have told which he loved with the most enthusiasm—his stately and beautiful mother, or his lovely bride elect. In sober truth, he adored the one and worshipped the other.



The most splendid preparations were made for the approaching marriage. The first milliners, dress makers, and jewellers of the city were engaged upon the bride's trousseau. Congratulations poured in upon the family.

The evening before the wedding arrived. The table for the wedding breakfast was already splendidly set out in the dining-room and the room closed up until the morning.

Lois and Welby sat together in the elegant little reception parlor. Upon a round table, covered with a velvet cloth, in the centre of the room, were arranged the beautiful bridal presents—magnificent sets of jewels, vases, statuettes, books, a writing-desk of papier-maché, a work-box of malachite, a dressing-case of rosewood with silver fittings, etc., etc., etc.

More presents were continually arriving.

Lois had risen and was showing Welby a card case of virgin gold that pleased her fancy, when suddenly the door opened and Mrs. Greville, pale as death, shaking as with an ague fit, and holding in her hand an open letter, rushed into the room!

"Lois! Welby! Your marriage cannot go forward!" she cried, and tottering toward the nearest sofa, sank into a deep swoon.



## CHAPTER L.

### ORPHAN ETTIE.

If you but knew her good and tender heart,  
Its girl's trust, its woman's constancy,  
How pure yet passionate, how calm yet kind,  
How grave yet joyous, how reserved—yet free  
As light where friends are; how imbued with love  
The world most prizes, yet the simplest.—*Browning.*

WE left Ettie Burns weeping over the grave of her grandfather—her only friend. But little time was given Ettie to



weep. The hard hand of necessity, with its very rough pocket handkerchief, wiped her eyes.

Old Captain Fuljoy, in the midst of his own bitter griefs, lost no time in discharging the trust left him by his deceased friend.

He had personally directed the funeral, and from the grave he would have led Ettie to his own house. But the weeping girl begged that she might be permitted to return to her old home, and remain there till the last moment, before departing for the distant abode of her grandmother. The farm and farm-house were to be rented out, and the rents to be devoted to Ettie's support, or left to accumulate for her benefit, as her grandmother should prove to be able and willing to keep her or otherwise. The stock and furniture were to be sold at once, or as soon as possible, to pay the funeral expenses of the major, to give Ettie and her attendant a respectable mourning outfit, and to defray their expenses to their future home.

But as this would probably be a work of time, the good old captain, with his accustomed liberality, advanced all the money necessary for these purposes.

Thus, then, it was on a lovely summer morning that Ettie Burns, Miss Pinchett, and Captain Fuljoy stood upon the rustic porch of the old farm-house, watching up the creek for the distant appearance of the "Busy Bee," who was that morning expected on her return trip from Creek-head, and by whom Ettie and Miss Pinchett were to take their passage to Baltimore. On the summit of the hill in front of the house waved a little red flag, as a signal for the boat to stop and send a skiff ashore there for passengers.

Poor Ettie loved her home as a kitten does. That morning she had visited and taken leave of every room in the house, every barn, corn house, and wood-shed on the farm. She had fed the poultry for the last time; she had stroked the cows, and hugged the sheep, patted the pigs on the head, and cried over the horses. And she had fondled her



dog and cat, and committed them to the tender care of Captain Fuljoy, who promised to take them all with him to the isle, and love them for Ettie's sake. And to prove it, the old man held in his arms the tortoise-shell cat, which he continually caressed, and the little lapdog, which lay sleeping with its head on his shoulder.

Ettie's large, dark eyes were red with weeping at leaving her beloved old home, and yet sparkling with light at the thought of the strange new world into which she was going.

"Here comes the steamer! Courage, my little girl! You are about to enter upon the great world!" cried the captain, as he levelled his glass far up the creek, where, through the thin, golden morning mist, the white smoke of the steamboat was seen. And soon the sound of her paddle wheels was heard, and soon after she came in sight—a beautiful object, as she sped onward over the broad, bright waters, shining in the morning sun between their green-wooded shores. She saw the signal, for she turned her course so as to come down on this side between Fuljoy's Isle and Burnstop.

"Now, my brave girl! come along, and never look behind you!" said the captain, as he transferred both cat and dog to one arm, and gave the other to Ettie to lead her down the hill.

Ettie's full, crimson lips trembled, and her large, dark eyes filled with tears.

"Good-by, old home! good-by, dear old home!" she cried, as she took the captain's offered arm. They rapidly descended the hill, and came down to the water's edge. Their luggage was already on the beach, in charge of the captain's servant, Stepney.

The steamer had stopped just opposite the spot where they stood, and sent out a boat, that was now rapidly approaching the shore. Every stroke of the oars that brought her nearer, seemed to fall heavily upon Ettie's heart. As it grated upon the sand, on reaching the beach, Ettie threw herself, sobbing, into the arms of the old captain.



"Here! hold the dog and cat, Stepney!" said the old sailor, transferring the pets to his man, while he drew Ettie into his embrace, kissed her, and solemnly blessed her. Lifting his hat from his venerable white head, and placing his hand upon hers, he said:

"May the Father of the fatherless watch over you, my beloved child! May He preserve you from all the temptations, sins, and perils that beset your youth, sex, and orphanage! May He lead you through a righteous, useful, happy life, to a good old age, a peaceful death, and a blessed immortality, for the Saviour's sake! Amen!"

Then he put on his hat, lifted her as though she had been an infant, and placed her in the boat.

Ettie was sobbing as if her heart would break.

The captain then courteously assisted Miss Pinchett into the boat, seated her comfortably, shook hands with her, and stepped back upon the sands. The rowers took their oars, and were about to push the boat off, when Ettie looked up from the handkerchief in which she had been sobbing, and said:

"My little dog and cat! I haven't said good-by to the poor things yet!"

But even while she spoke, the captain was bringing them to her.

"Take them, Ettie! take them with you, dear child," he said, placing them in her lap.

"But, oh! may I? Will the people on the boats and in the cars let me take my little dog and cat?" said Ettie, eagerly; smiling through her tears.

"Yes, my dear! they are so small and gentle. They will annoy no one. Miss Pinchett can take the cat and you the dog. If any one objects, tell them that you are a poor fatherless and motherless girl, going among strange relatives, and your two little friends are all that is left of your home. My word for it, no one will wish to deprive you of them. Have faith in the good feelings of your fellow-



beings, Ettie! Once more good-by, my child!" said the captain, stooping and pressing a kiss upon her forehead, and then turning hastily away, and striding to the shore, to conceal the tears that rushed to his eyes.

The boat put off. Ettie clasped her pets to her bosom, and sat watching the hill, the house, and the captain, until the steamer was reached.

Then, in the bustle of getting on board, of course she lost sight of them. But as soon as she reached the upper deck, she turned her face to them again. There they were: the old wooded hill—the house, with its rustic porch, peeping out from between the trees—and the good old captain standing on the beach waving his handkerchief.

Through nearly blinding tears Ettie watched them, and waved her own.

The boat started gaily down the creek, but Ettie's face was still turned to the home and friend of her childhood. She watched them with a loving constancy, until the hill, the house, and the old man, dropped behind, receded far, and faded in the distance.

"Oh, Father in Heaven! grant that I may come back to them all again!" prayed Ettie, bursting into a passion of tears and sobs. Miss Pinchett sat in silence by her side, holding the cat in her lap. And thus they passed down the beautiful creek, and reached the little seaport town of Cornport at its mouth. Here the Busy Bee stopped some twenty minutes, to take in the mail, some freight, and a few passengers. All this time Ettie sat buried in grief, not caring to look up. She had often been to Cornport, so the little place had nothing new to attract her. But Cornport had been the utmost limit of her travels. She had never been farther from home than that. To her experience, that was the end of the world, the jumping-off place! Still, she was familiar with it, and there was nothing at its crowded and busy little wharf to win her for one moment from her sorrow; so she sat with her arms around her little



dog, and her weeping face hidden upon his curly white hair.

The truest sympathy is silent, and therefore Miss Pinchett sat beside the young mourner, without, just now, making any attempt to stay her tears. She thought, and justly thought, it was better that Ettie should have her cry out. Such gusts of tears and sobs refresh a youthful mourner's heart, as thunder-storms do the face of nature.

At length the boat started, and left Cornport with its busy little traffic far behind.

Then Miss Pinchett thought it time to speak.

"Look, Ettie, my love," she said, "we are out in the bay, now! You have never seen the open bay before."

Ettie looked up with her dilated and tearful eyes. She was too much of a child not to be pleased with a new scene. She looked around.

Water! water! everywhere—rolling out in vast, liquid, heaving fields, to the utmost verge of the horizon.

"How grand!" said Ettie, wiping her eyes, and smiling like a sun-burst after a storm. And fascinated by the first sight of the sea, she sat, sending her gaze out to the far distant line of light where the water met the sky.

But presently, she happened to turn her head and see the dark blue line of the Maryland shore behind her, and her mood changed, and she threw herself in Miss Pinchett's arms, and burst into a fresh gust of tears and sobs, exclaiming between them:

"Oh, my dear old home! Oh, my dear good friends! Oh, my dear old Maryland! Shall I ever, ever, ever, see you all again?"

"Yes, dear, you will see them often and often again, please the Lord!" said the old lady, gently caressing her.

"But oh! look, Miss Pinchett," she exclaimed, pointing to the receding shore. "It is going, going, going, dropping behind the horizon! My old Maryland shore! My dear old Maryland shore! Oh! how long will it be before



I see you again? But I will never love another place like you, old home! No splendor of fortune in other lands shall ever turn my heart from you! And when Ettie is free, she will come back to you again and be happy!"

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## CHAPTER LI.

### ETTIE ENTERS THE WORLD.

Oh, wonder!

How many goodly creatures there are here!

How beauteous mankind is! Oh, brave new world,

That has such people in it.—*Shakespeare.*

ETTIE watched until the last faint line of the shore had faded quite away, and there was nothing around her but a vast circle of water, of which her busy little steamer seemed the centre.

Presently a bell rung.

"That is the first dinner bell, my dear. We had better go down into our cabin and take off our bonnets," said Miss Pinchett.

Ettie had never in her short life been on board a steamer. All her trips about the creek had been performed in her grandfather's little canoe, therefore of the interior economy of a steamboat she knew just nothing at all.

It was, then, with some degree of childish curiosity that she followed Miss Pinchett down the little winding stairs that led to the small compartment in the middle of the boat called the Ladies' Cabin. Fortunately, there were no ladies except Ettie and Miss Pinchett. They had the cabin all to themselves.

Ettie looked around with much interest. There were eight berths, four on each side. There was a bureau and looking-glass at the end, a little centre-table, with a Bible



on it, in the middle, and two rocking-chairs beside it. These were the private accommodations offered by the Busy Bee to her lady passengers. And they were amply sufficient, lady passengers being very rare on the little steamer.

"Well," said Ettie, gazing around her, "the steamboat seemed to me like a living thing moving through the water, and this close place might be its stomach! But where are we to sleep?"

Miss Pinchett pointed to the berths, saying:

"We are the only occupants of the cabin; we can have a choice of all these."

"What, these shelves! We shall roll off, Pinchy!" said Ettie, with something like a return to her old gaiety. "Pinchy" was Ettie's pet name for her friend, by which she always addressed her except in moments of grief or gravity. The old lady hailed it now as a sign of Ettie's returning cheerfulness.

"There! there is the second bell! They don't give a body time here to comb their hair," said Miss Pinchett, as another bell sounded through the boat.

The stewardess, a short, fat, motherly-looking black woman, came in now to show them the way to the little dining saloon.

This was also the gentleman's cabin, and their berths were ranged upon each side, tier above tier. The long table, covered with a good dinner, stood in the middle. There were about a dozen guests seated, comprising farmers and tradesmen, who were going up to Baltimore to sell or to buy goods. Among them was a neighbor of Major Burns, with whom Ettie had a slight acquaintance. Meeting him there afforded another diversion to her mind. A steamboat dinner is usually disagreeable enough to most people, but to Ettie it was a most interesting novelty.

When it was over, accompanied by Miss Pinchett, she returned to the cabin to see after her pets. Here she was met by the stewardess, who pointing indignantly to where



the little dog Flora and the cat Nancy were running about, she said :

“ See here, ladies ! we never allows no cats nor no dogs, no how, in our boat ! ”

“ Oh, but please—— ” began Ettie, when Miss Pinchett stopped her, and slipping a gold piece in the hand of the woman, said :

“ There are no ladies but ourselves in the cabin, to be annoyed by these little creatures, so perhaps you will bring them something to eat. ”

“ Oh yes, mum, cert’ny, ” said the woman, instantly changing her tone.

Ettie had the satisfaction of seeing her pets well fed, and then they went up on deck, and sat and watched the rippling waves as they washed the boat’s side, or noticed the track of foam left behind its stern, or looked over the blue expanse of water, observing here and there a distant sail. Thus passed the evening until the late tea hour.

Even after that, Ettie came up on deck to see the setting sun sink down, as it were, into the abyss of the sea, drawing after it a long line of light from the surface of the water. Then, as the short twilight passed away, she sat watching the stars shine out from the clear blue-black sky above, and the phosphoric fire sparkle on the rippling, dark waters below. There were neither winds nor waves to disturb the beautiful motion of the steamer, as it glided on its way.

At length, however, Ettie, wearied by a day of unusual excitement, went below and turned in, and was soon rocked to sleep in the cradle of her berth. She slept a sound and dreamless sleep through the night, lulled by the gentle motion of the boat. She was awakened at length by the stopping of this motion. She opened her eyes and saw that it was dawn, and that Miss Pinchett, already dressed, was standing before her.

“ We are at the landing, ” said the lady ; “ get up and dress ; the passengers are all ready to go on shore. We have



only time to snatch a hasty breakfast, if we wish to catch the early train."

In an instant Ettie rolled out of her berth; and she got herself into her clothes quicker than she had ever done in her life before.

Miss Pinchett busied herself with gathering together all their little personal effects that lay about the cabin, and tying them up in parcels.

Presently the stewardess, whose soul had been bought by the bit of gold, came in to bring a plate of meat for Ettie's pets, and to say that the breakfast was on the table.

They went into the saloon, made a hasty meal, and then having gathered all their luggage together, not forgetting Flora and Nancy, they had it piled in and about a hack, which they entered, and ordered to be driven to the Philadelphia railway station.

They were fortunate in just catching the express train, and soon found themselves seated in the comfortable ladies' car, and flying along the country.

To Ettie, who had never seen a railway train before, this was all like necromancy. And as cities, towns, and villages, fields, forests, and farms fled behind the rushing cars, she looked after them with eyes of terror. And when a train from the opposite direction came flashing past, she shrunk up in a little heap and clung to Miss Pinchett for safety. Ettie's pets did not seem to approve of these goings-on any more than their mistress did; for while Ettie would shrink and tremble, the little dog would bark, and the little cat put up its back and spit defiance at the irresistible monster.

The car was not full. Ettie and her companions had four seats to themselves. And moreover, there was no one sitting very near them. Perhaps that was the reason why no one objected to the presence of the pets. It is true that when the conductor came around to collect the tickets, he *did* look rather hard at these unusual passengers; but as



Ettie raised her large, dark, appealing eyes to his face, and he noticed her sad countenance and deep mourning dress, he merely said :

“ Well, well ; all right,” and went on his way ; but not until Ettie’s bright smile, bursting like sunshine through her tears, had thanked him.

In an hour or two, also, finding that she was not ground to powder by the rushing, thundering, and crashing trains, she plucked up courage and looked around, and her spirits rose. She was passing through miles and miles of a richly cultivated country, the like of which she had never beheld in her own beautiful but wild region. She was entering upon a strange, new life. She looked with the greatest interest upon every thing around her, yet the thought of the dear old grandmother she was to find at the end of her journey charmed her more than any thing in its course.

Miss Pinchett, overpowered by the swift motion of the train, settled herself in the corner of her seat and fell fast asleep. The cat and dog followed her example. And so did many of her fellow passengers.

Ettie fell to day-dreaming, and all about her grandmother, and her maiden aunt !—for, alas ! there was a maiden aunt in the case !—and if the thought of the latter was not an absolute horror to Ettie, it was at least a very serious drawback to her anticipations of happiness ; for she knew in her own mind, without any one’s telling her, that this obnoxious maiden aunt was tall and bony, with a sharp nose and a sharp voice, and that she spent her time in scolding servants and making pickles, and that she would be sure to want to teach her, Ettie, to do crochet work and add up sums, both of which the child’s soul abhorred !

But it was the nature of Ettie’s buoyant spirit always to look upon the bright side. So she speedily sent the image of her repulsive maiden aunt to Coventry, and called up that of her grandmother. Ah, that was something to delight in !



Ettie had never known a mother's perfect love, nor a grandmother's indulgent fondness ; but she had dreamed of both ! A mother's love would never be hers ; but she was about to enjoy a grandmother's ! She had noticed how other girls had been loved by their mothers and grandmothers, and that the manifestations of a mother's love were part caresses and part rebuke ; while those of a grandmother's were all petting. And she greatly preferred the latter.

She recalled to mind the rustic grandmothers she had seen in her native region—good, old women in stuff gowns and large aprons, and white caps and round spectacles—comfortable old ladies, who wore bottomless pockets with endless supplies of gingerbread for the children.

Then she pictured to herself her own grandmother who lived in the city, and was said to be wealthy, and she imagined her to be a nice old lady, with soft, silky white hair just parted beneath her close book muslin cap, and wearing a fine black bombazine dress, with a book muslin tucker folded around her neck inside her dress, and a black silk apron and black lace mitts. She liked this old lady, and thought how happy she should be to have such a one to pet her.

This grandmother she fancied lived in a pretty cottage with a flower garden near the suburbs of the city, quite away from its noise and heat and dust.

And this grandmother would give her a pretty bedroom all to herself, with white dimity curtains to the bed, and a white jasmine vine growing over the window. And she would find out how destitute Ettie was of all conveniences for neatness, order, and comfort, and being herself a very particular old lady, she would take Ettie to the city and present her with a japan dressing case, a painted work box and a little mahogany writing-desk, all completely furnished. Of any thing more elegant than these, the orphan never dreamed !



And, oh ! she resolved to be so attentive and dutiful and affectionate to this dear grandmother, and to repay her so richly for all her love.

So absorbed was Ettie in her day-dream that she never awoke until she was startled by the rising of every one in the car, who begun to hurry on their shawls and pick up their travelling bags, as for a general stampede. As the train was still in motion, Ettie did not know what to make of this ! But as this mode of travelling seemed to present a succession of novelties, Ettie would not betray her surprise. So she only gave Miss Pinchett a sharp nudge to wake her up, and said :

“The people are all going ! I don’t know what is the matter !”

“Have we reached the ferry-boat ? Oh, yes, so we have !” yawned the spinster, starting up and beginning to gather together her travelling bag, umbrella, and extra shawl. They followed the crowd, thus reaching in safety the ferry-boat, where Ettie and Miss Pinchett went to a long and crowded table and got a luncheon of hot coffee and stewed oysters, and where Ettie bought a slice of beef-steak, which she gave to her pets in the privacy of the “Ladies’ Dressing-Room,” where nurses “most did congregate” to attend to their babies.

Again following the crowd, Ettie and Miss Pinchett entered the connecting train of cars, and once more found themselves rushing over the land with lightning speed !

Again Miss Pinchett, overcome by her luncheon and the motion of the train, fell asleep.

And Ettie fell to day-dreaming about her nice, old grandmother, the suburban cottage, the white curtained bedroom, the dressing-case, work-box, writing-desk, etc. And so she continued to dream until late in the afternoon, when the train once more stopped at the water’s side, and they had to leave it to enter a ferry-boat, and cross a broad river like an arm of the sea.



But when this ferry-boat approached the opposite shore, Ettie, who was on the lookout, beheld a magnificent city, the grandeur of which had never even entered her dreams, although those dreams were of the grandest. They landed in the midst of a bustle that nearly stunned little Ettie into idiocy.

"Here we are, my dear, at our journey's end! In an hour we shall be seated at tea in the old lady's parlor," said Miss Pinchett, as she beckoned a hackman, and gave him the tickets to get their luggage.

"Hold your pocket in your hand, Ettie, or it may be picked in an instant," said Miss Pinchett, while they were waiting for the hackman to return.

Ettie clapped her hand on her pocket, but the next instant exclaimed in dismay:

"Oh! it's too late! it's already picked! my pocket-book is gone!"

"Goodness, gracious, me alive! how much was in it?" cried Miss Pinchett, in consternation.

"A quarter and a fip and three cents and two postage stamps!"

"Why, was *that* all the money you had, child?"

"All I had in *that* pocket-book! The two golden double eagles that dear old Captain Fuljoy gave me, are in my new crimson purse, at the bottom of my trunk."

"That is fortunate! Now, here comes the hackman with our trunks," she said, as that functionary approached.

The luggage was put on, the order where to drive was given, they entered the carriage, and started.

The gas lamps in all the streets and all the shop-windows were now lighted, and poor little rustic Ettie was half stupefied with amazement. As the carriage rolled over miles of illuminated, crowded, and noisy streets, Ettie felt dazzled by the splendor of the shop-windows, blinded by the glare of the gas lamps, deafened by the clatter of the omnibuses, confused by the throng of people, and generally



overwhelmed by the wonders of the great city. Through miles and miles and miles of this street, and then into another, more illumined, more splendid, and more crowded than the first! Ettie jumped from one side of the carriage to the other, never tired of gazing out.

"I declare, this city is like our great St. Mary's forest, and the houses are as thick as the trees," she exclaimed.

Through miles and miles of this street, and then into a broad, quiet avenue, where there were no shops and no crowd, but where lofty palace dwellings lined each side.

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## CHAPTER LII.

### ETTIE'S SPLENDID GRANDMAMMA.

Full-blown and rich in her maturity,  
The dwelling of a spirit not of earth,  
But ever mingling with the pure and high  
Conceptions of a soul that spreads its wings  
To fly where mind, when boldest, dares to soar.—*J. G. Percival.*

THE carriage drew up before one of the most imposing of these buildings—a large, double-fronted, four-storied, brown mansion, with wrought-iron balconies, plate-glass windows, marble steps, and all the external evidences of wealth, taste, and munificence. Lights gleamed through the nearly closed shutters of the windows, showing life, warmth, and brilliancy within.

While Ettie gazed in stupefaction upon this magnificent dwelling, Miss Pinchett said:

"Here we are, my dear, at your grandmother's house; take up your little dog, and let's get out."

"THAT!" exclaimed Ettie, with mouth and eyes wide open with astonishment. "Why, that is not my grandmother's house! My grandmother lives in ever such a pretty white cottage, with a flower garden all around it! not in a grand palace like this!"



"Who told you so, my dear?" inquired Miss Pinchett, as the driver opened the door and let down the steps.

"Why, nobody told me; I thought so of my own self," said Ettie.

"Then you were mistaken, my dear; your grandmother lives here," replied Miss Pinchett, as she alighted and assisted Ettie to get out.

The driver had already gone up to the door, and knocked and rung.

Ettie and Miss Pinchett went up the steps, and by the time they had reached the top, the door was opened by a black footman in livery.

"Tell your mistress that I have brought her granddaughter home," said Miss Pinchett to the footman.

"Yes, mum—cert'ney, mum—please to walk in here, mum," replied the man, with a bow at the end of every phrase, as he led the travelers through the fine entrance hall to an elegant little reception parlor, whose floor was covered with a blue and white velvet carpet, so rich that Ettie hesitated to step on it; and whose window curtains, and chair and sofa covers were all of pale blue and silver satin damask. A chandelier of silver and crystal hung from the ceiling and illumined the room. Ettie took out a clean pocket handkerchief, and laid it very carefully over one of the small reception chairs before she ventured to sit down on a thing so elegant.

As soon as the servant had disappeared, Ettie, sitting upon the very edge of the chair, whispered, in awed tones:

"What does the black man wear such fine soldier's clothes for, Miss Pinchett?"

"It is not soldier's clothes; it is livery, my dear."

"And what is livery, Miss Pinchett?"

"A particular sort of a servile uniform, worn by the servants of individual families, to distinguish them from the servants of other wealthy families."

"Oh!—but how very light the house is! as light as day,



and a great deal lighter than some days! It really makes my eyes ache! What a deal of oil it must take, not only to light this house I mean, but to light the great streets we passed through! Why I should think it would take all the oil of all the whales in all the oceans in the world to feed them!" said Ettie, gazing open-mouthed about her.

"It is not oil, it is gas, my dear."

"And what is gas?"

"Well, I hardly know myself; except that it is a subtle, invisible agent made from coal, and much used by the people of the cities to light up their streets and houses, and also by politicians in their stump-speeches to dazzle the intellects of the voters."

As Miss Pinchett got through the luminous description of a luminous subject, the footman re-entered the parlor, and with three bows, said:

"If you please, mum, you and the young lady, mum, is to walk up-stairs to de dressing-room, mum."

"You must show us the way, then," said Miss Pinchett.

"Cert'ney, mum, cert'ney," replied the footman, with two bows.

Ettie and Miss Pinchett arose and followed their conductor through the spacious hall, up the broad staircase, and into a lofty front room on the first floor, the splendor of which so blinded the eyes of Ettie that she could make out nothing but a glow of rose-colored satin damask chair and sofa covers, and window curtains, a gleam of lofty mirrors, a drift of lace draped dressing table, and a dazzle of gas-light over all.

At last, through the splendid confusion, advanced a stately and beautiful woman, whose elegant mourning dress of black moire-antique, trimmed with crape, only rendered her blonde beauty more radiant by its contrast. Her plump neck and arms were bare, and adorned by a necklace and bracelets of jet that set off to the best advantage the snowy whiteness of both. Her fair and classic face was



flushed with a delicate bloom. Her graceful head had no other ornament than its own rich golden auburn braids and ringlets. There was a shade of deep sadness upon this stately lady's face, yet through it all she smiled as she advanced toward the travellers, and giving the precedence first to age, offered her hand to Miss Pinchett, saying:

"I am very glad to see you, ma'am, and thank you very much for bringing Miss Burns so safely to us. Please take a seat."

Miss Pinchett bowed, and said:

"Not at all! It was quite a pleasure," and sat down upon one of the rose-colored sofas.

Then the lady turned to Ettie, and drew her to her own bosom in a warm embrace, saying:

"You are welcome, most welcome, to my heart, my own dear Esther. Come and sit by me, and let me look at you, my child!"

And she led Ettie to another sofa, immediately under a gas-light, and making her sit quite close to herself, threw her arm around her, and, to Ettie's infinite confusion, looked steadily in her face, saying, as she perused each feature of that blushing countenance:

"Yes, you are like your mother! You have the same Celtic style of features, the same glittering jet black hair, the same burning black eyes, and the same glowing crimson cheeks and lips! Yes, you are like your mother, and she was as like her father as a girl could be to a man. How old are you, my darling?"

"I shall be sixteen on the first of August," said Ettie, trembling.

"A summer-child; just what your mother was at your age! I could almost imagine it was my own Esther sitting by me! You are just at the age she was when——oh, Esther! Esther! Esther!" cried the lady, suddenly overwhelmed by what seemed a paroxysm of remorseful love!

Ettie began to cry, partly from nervousness, partly from



fright, and partly from sympathy. And she had no pocket handkerchief to wipe away her tears, having left hers spread over the bottom of the elegant chair upon which she had sat in the parlor. So Ettie rubbed her fists into her eyes instead.

"There, do not weep, my dear," said the lady, taking down the little hands. "All this is long past, and cannot now be mended. Think of something else, my love! Tell me about your journey. Was it very disagreeable?"

"Oh, no, ma'am, it was beautiful! I was delighted all the way; first with the lovely steamboat, and then with the grand train, and now with this magnificent city."

"You are an enthusiast, my dear Ettie! ah, yes, like your mother and her father. But you look tired, child. I will ring for cook to send up your tea here, and then you shall go to your room." And the lady arose and rang the bell.

"If you please, ma'am," said Ettie, and then she stopped and blushed.

"What, Esther? Speak, dear! What is it?"

"If you please, ma'am, then I should like to see my grandmother first."

"Your——what did you say, my dear Ettie?"

"I said, if you please, ma'am, I should like to see my grandmother first. That is, if she has not gone to bed; because I know she expects me to-night; but if she is gone to bed, I would not disturb her for the whole world."

"Your grandmother, did you say, my dear?"

"Yes ma'am, please."

"Why, Ettie, is it possible that you do not know that I am your grandmother?" inquired the lady, in astonishment.

"You my grandmother!" said Ettie, half angry at what she took to be an ill-timed jest. "Oh, no, ma'am, I know better than *that*, too, if I was brought up in the woods! You could not possibly be my grandmother!"



"Why, Ettie, why not?" asked the lady, amused at the perfect sincerity of Ettie's manner.

"Because, ma'am, you are a beautiful young lady," said Ettie, glancing at the blooming face and sunny curls, plump white neck and graceful arms of her hostess—"and my own nice, dear, good grandmother is quite an old lady, with hair as white as cotton, and she wears an old-fashioned black bombazine gown, with a white muslin inside handkerchief, and a large black silk apron and black lace mitts, and a nice white cap tied close under her chin, and also spectacles."

"But, my dear, who gave you this minute description of your grandmother?" inquired the lady, highly amused.

"Nobody at all, ma'am; but I had seen a great many grandmothers in our neighborhood, if I never had one before, and so you see allowing for the difference between country and town, it was very easy for me to figure out what my own dear, old grandmother would look like, and I am quite sure I should know her among a thousand!"

The lady for a moment forgot the grief that lay heavy at the bottom of her heart, and laughed a low, silvery little laugh, as she said:

"That grandmother that you have described is the creation of your own fancy only—a fictitious grandmother; I am the real one! Can you not believe it?"

"No, ma'am," replied Ettie, stoutly, "because, as I said before, you are a beautiful young lady, in a splendid evening dress, with low neck and bare arms. And my grandmother is a very old lady, in a black gown, white cap, and spectacles."

"My love, what was her name?" laughed the lady.

"Mrs. Gertrude Courtney Greville."

"That is my name, my child."

"Ma'am," said Ettie, with rising wrath—"If I am a simple country girl, I know *one* thing; I know it is neither kind nor lady-like to try to hoax a poor orphan who is



longing for her grandmother, by telling\* her such stories! But you cannot humbug me in that way. I am not to be sold at *that* price. And so far from being my grandmother, you can not even be my maiden aunt.

"Your maiden aunt!! By the way, I will introduce you to your maiden aunt!—Celeste!" said the lady, laughing, and addressing her French maid, who was busy in another part of the room. "Go and say to Miss Howard that I wish to see her here."

"*Oui, Madame,*" answered the girl, leaving the room for the purpose.

The lady sat smiling upon Ettie, who remained in offended silence until the door opened and a lovely girl, in deep mourning, with a tall, slender, and graceful form, regular features, snowy forehead, rosy cheeks and lips, clear blue eyes, and pale golden ringlets, and with a countenance of the freshest youthfulness, entered the room and advanced smiling toward her mamma.

"Lois, my love, this is your niece, Esther. Ettie, my dear, embrace your——maiden aunt!"

Ettie looked up at this fresh and blooming girl, and then at the beautiful and stately woman. Mother and daughter were the rose and the rose-bud, with the morning dew still sparkling on them.

But they were not what Ettie had expected to find, and so she bowed very sullenly and went off in dudgeon to Miss Pinchett and said:

"Pinchy, take me to my grandmother and auntie, or else take me back home again! I won't stay here for that big wax doll to make fun of me!"

"My dear, bless your heart, that lady is your grandmother; she is younger than you expected to find her—perhaps she is not over forty-eight, or fifty—and she has taken care of herself and uses all the arts of the toilet to improve her beauty; that is all; now come right back with me and behave yourself," whispered Miss Pinchett, rising to lead Ettie up to her relatives.



"Pinchy, I know you would not deceive me! Is she, though, really now?" inquired Ettie.

"Yes, my dear, on my word," said Miss Pinchett, as they crossed the room.

When they stood before Mrs. Greville and Lois, Miss Pinchett said:

"I hope you will forgive poor Ettie, Madam, she is country-bred, and failed at first to recognize in you the relative she expected to find."

"Oh, I will forgive her, for the implied compliment she has paid me in so sincerely doubting that I could possibly be her grandmother!" said Mrs. Greville, smiling and drawing the blushing girl to her bosom.

"And now, Ettie dear, as you favored me with a description of the grandmamma you expected to meet, let Lois hear what sort of an aunt you pictured to yourself?"

But Ettie stood embarrassed and blushing, until Lois suddenly seized and kissed her, and said:

"Mamma! this child ought to have her supper and be put to bed."

"Yes, certainly; I rang once, but you see no one has appeared. Ring again."

Lois did so, and this time the summons was answered and the necessary orders given. And in a very few minutes a nice little supper for two was served in Mrs. Greville's dressing-room.

Ettie and Miss Pinchett sat down and did ample justice to the delicacies spread before them.

After this the service was removed, and Celeste directed to show Ettie and her attendant to their chamber.



## CHAPTER LIII.

## MRS. GREVILLE'S GRIEF.

All things that we ordained festival,  
Turn from their office to black funeral;  
Our instruments to melancholy bells;  
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast;  
Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change;  
Our bridal flowers might serve a buried corpse,  
And all things change them to the contrary.—*Shakespeare.*

WHEN Mrs. Greville had kissed and dismissed Ettie, she beckoned Lois to her side and said:

“My dear, just go after that girl; and when you get to her chamber, send Celeste back to me; and then make an excuse to help Ettie to unpack her trunk; and do you notice what she has got, and what she has need of; and then come and tell me.”

Lois flew out and overtook the party on the stairs, and accompanied them to the door of an upper chamber, immediately above the dressing-room of Mrs. Greville.

Here she dismissed Celeste, and introduced Ettie into a spacious apartment, elegantly fitted up, the wall paper, carpet, curtains and chair-covers of which were all of the most delicate pea-green and white.

“Mamma had this room fitted up expressly for you, dear; how do you like it?” said Lois.

“Oh, it is splendid!” cried Ettie, with a burst of enthusiasm.

“There is nothing splendid about it, dear; it is simply what I should call a neat room for a young girl.”

“Oh, my goodness! our rooms at Burnstop were as neat as ever they could be, but they were not like this, were they, Pinchy? Why, here every thing is silk, and lace, and velvet; and all corresponding, even down to the basin and ewer—every thing is green and white!”



"Well, dear, isn't it as easy, while one is fitting up a room, to have the furniture to correspond as not?"

"I suppose every thing is easy to my splendid grandmother. But where is Pinchy's trunk? There's mine; but I don't see Pinchy's."

"Here, dear," said Lois, opening a door leading into a small adjoining bedroom, neatly but plainly furnished; "here is Miss Pinchett's room, and her trunk is in it. If you both please, you can always leave the intervening door open, so that you may talk all night if you like."

"Then, if you please, ma'am, I will retire at once," said Miss Pinchett, thinking, perhaps, that the two young girls might like to be left together for a while. And after kissing Ettie, and taking up the cat and dog, she marched into the little room and shut the door behind her.

"Is she angry?" inquired Lois.

"Oh, no—Pinchy is never angry; she is only going to say her prayers. I dare say she will open the door before she goes to bed," replied Ettie.

"And now, dear," said Lois, "I will help you to unpack your trunk."

Ettie, with great pride, unlocked her trunk, and displayed her mourning outfit—every thing brand new, and of the best materials to be procured at Cornport; and all her underclothing in dozens, and got up in the best style by Aunt Prissy, the laundress at Burnstop.

"See," said Ettie, confidentially turning her treasures over, "how nice every thing is! The black is as black as ink, and the white as white as snow! It is true, I haven't got any thing as shiny and watery like my splendid grandmother's dress; but then they don't have 'em down our way."

"No, I suppose not," said Lois, with half a shrug; adding, "my dear, I think you had better not take out any thing more than just what you want to-night."

And when Ettie had done so, Lois led her up to the



easy chair in front of the dressing table, and made her sit down in it, and then kissed her and bade her good-night, saying:

"My apartments are on the right side of the hall as you go down-stairs. If you should feel lonesome, or frightened, or ill, send your Pinchy to my door, and I will come to you."

As soon as Lois was gone, Ettie began to amuse herself with the novelties around her. There were two gas burners each side of the dressing glass; Ettie had seen Lois turn them and lower the light. Ettie now turned them on full, and gazed at herself in the tall mirror until she was tired. Then she rambled all over the room, examining every article in it. Finally, she went to Miss Pinchett's door, and inquired:

"Pinchy, are you gone to bed?"

"Going," was the drowsy answer.

"Well, give me my little dog."

The dog was handed out, and Ettie undressed herself, *blew out the gas*, and went to bed!

Meanwhile, Lois returned to Mrs. Greville's dressing-room.

"Well, my dear, has the poor child a proper outfit?"

Lois shrugged her shoulders, as she answered:

"Mamma, just fancy that she has nothing!"

"'Nothing!'" echoed Mrs. Greville.

"Nothing whatever."

"And yet that was a heavy trunk that went up-stairs, if I may judge from the many times I heard the man set it down and breathe."

"Oh, yes! a regular sea-chest, mamma. And packed full of such a lot of rubbish! coarse alpaca, and coarser de-laine dresses—made in such a style! and cotton under-clothing and night dresses, and——In short, mamma, though the poor child is as vain of her wardrobe as if it were the outfit of a princess, there is not an article in her possession fit



for her to wear! And so you may just make up your mind to send her to Blank's to-morrow, and order her a complete wardrobe from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot! And for the contents of the sea-chest, we can send them to St. Martha's Orphan Asylum, where the uniform of the children is black and white. And now, mamma, good-night." And Lois tripped up-stairs to her chamber, and, feeling very tired, soon undressed and went to bed. She had fallen comfortably asleep when she heard a loud knocking at her door, and the voice of Ettie crying:

"Maiden aunt! maiden aunt! maiden aunt! come here!"

"What is the matter, Ettie?" said Lois, springing out of bed, and going to the door.

"Oh! maiden aunt! something dreadful ails my lamps! They keep such a hissing, and blowing, and roaring that I can't sleep for them! And they smell so awful they nearly smother me; and even my little dog has nearly sneezed his poor little nose off!"

Before Ettie had finished her speech, Lois had thrown on a dressing-gown and come out.

"Oh! Ettie, the gas is escaping enough to kill you! Did you turn it off?"

"No, I blowed it out, all right! I had sense enough to do *that* much, if I was born in the woods."

"You blowed it out!" cried Lois, in dismay, hurrying to the burners, and turning the gas off, and then hoisting the windows to clear the room. "You blowed it out! You unlucky imp! it's a miracle it hadn't blown you up! Don't you know, Ettie, that if anybody blows the gas out, the gas returns the compliment by blowing them up! Now, never venture to do that again."

"Maiden aunt, I'll never touch the unchancy things again as long as ever I live! there!"

"I think you are right, Ettie. You had better let your Pinchy attend to them in future. There, now—your room is clear again, and I will bid you good-night," as she closed the windows and left the room.



Ettie returned to bed, and in ten minutes was fast asleep.

Late in the morning, Ettie arose and dressed herself with much care in the very best dress she possessed; and notwithstanding the contempt of Lois, Ettie looked very neat and pretty in her plain black alpaca, with her white linen collar and cuffs. At least she thought so, as she surveyed herself in the tall dressing glass. Then leaving Miss Pinchett at her morning prayers, Ettie hurried out and rapped at Lois' door, exclaiming:

"Maiden aunt! maiden aunt! I am ready to go down to breakfast when you are!"

"Come in, you troublesome elf! I am likely to have a nice, quiet time with you!" said Lois, laughingly, from within.

Ettie entered, and found Lois, in an elegant white morning dress, trimmed with black, sitting before her toilet table. Her maid stood behind her, giving the last twirl to a sunny ringlet. Lois rose smilingly to meet Ettie, and then conducted her down-stairs. In the breakfast parlor, they found Mrs. Greville and a handsome young man, whom the former presented to Ettie as her uncle, Welby Dunbar.

Ettie had never heard of this uncle before, yet his face seemed so familiar that she could scarcely take her eyes from it. Ettie had never had but one imperfect look at Colonel Greville, but it was the strong resemblance between the two men that perplexed her now.

During breakfast, Mrs. Greville seemed overshadowed with a deep gloom, that spread its contagion throughout the circle. Scarcely a word was spoken beyond those demanded by the courtesies of the table. After breakfast, Mrs. Greville arose, saying:

"Lois, my love, take Ettie out this morning, and get her whatever she requires," left the breakfast parlor, and retired to her private apartments.

"Lois, dearest," said Welby Dunbar, coming to her side,



"I had hoped that the arrival of this young lady would have aroused your dear mother from brooding over this affair."

"It did for a little while. She was quite cheerful last evening, even gay; but you see she has relapsed! Will you drive out with us? Shall we set you down at your office door?"

"If you please, dearest."

Lois rang the bell, and ordered the carriage to be at the door in half an hour, and then took Ettie up-stairs to get ready for the shopping expedition.

They were soon in the carriage and driving toward the city. They set Mr. Dunbar down at his office door, and then turned into Broadway. And if Ettie was astonished at the great city by gas-light, she was no less so when viewing its splendors under the blaze of the noonday sun.

Lois stopped at one of the gayest bazaars in the city. They entered and passed in turn through all the various departments, Lois selecting in each all that she deemed necessary for Ettie, and then directing that the articles should be sent home the same morning.

"Maiden aunt, I do believe you have not laid out less than fifty dollars on me this morning," said Ettie, as they returned to the carriage.

Lois smiled; the bill she had just paid was nearly ten times that amount, and she thought it very moderate.

"And now, Ettie, I have got every thing for you that I can think of. Is there any thing else that you would fancy, my dear, before we go home?"

"Maiden aunt, I should like a dressing case, and a work box, and a writing-desk, so as to keep all my things separate and in order. I never had either of them, though I have been longing for them all my life; but if you think I do not really want them, why, you need not get them."

"Not want them! Why, I do not see how you have been able to do without them! They are among the neces-



saries of life!" answered Lois, as she gave the order to drive to a certain establishment where such articles were exhibited for sale.

When they entered the show room, Ettie was bewildered by the beautiful and costly objects around her; but Lois had article after article taken down without being able to satisfy her own fastidious taste. There were boxes and desks of rosewood, satin-wood, ivory, mother-of-pearl, tortoise-shell, malachite, papier-maché, etc., etc., etc.

"Ettie, I cannot make a choice! choose yourself among them," said Lois.

"What's the price?" asked the practical country girl.

"Various prices, you observe, Miss—from ten dollars up to an hundred, and we have some even much higher," said the shopman.

"Oh, maiden aunt! the cheapest of these are too dear! I don't want any thing like these; but something plain! quite plain!" said Ettie.

"Put up that satin-wood dressing case, that papier-maché writing-desk, and that malachite work box," said Lois to the shopman, as she selected three of the most expensive articles on the counter. Ettie watched her in dismay.

"They are all completely furnished, Ettie! having every thing that you could possibly desire in the dressing, working, or writing department," said Lois, as they re-entered the carriage, and gave the order, "home."

"Maiden aunt, it is really awful to see how you spend money! If you go on at this rate, you will fetch up at the poor-house yet," said Ettie, solemnly.

Lois' silvery laughter was the only reply to the friendly warning.

They were soon at home, where they found luncheon spread in the dining-room.

Mrs. Greville joined them at the table; but she looked more despairing than ever. Lois tried, by telling of Ettie's



prudent economy, to raise her spirits, but Mrs. Greville only answered by a grave rebuke, and the meal was finished in silence, after which, as before, Mrs. Greville rose and retired to her private apartments.

Lois took Ettie up-stairs to examine the things that had been sent home.

As soon as they were alone in Ettie's chamber, the latter said :

"Maiden aunt, what is the matter with my splendid grandmother ; she looks very dull to-day ? Is she mad with me for blowing the gas out ?"

"No, you little goose ! No, Ettie ; but about two weeks ago, a great blow fell upon poor mamma ; it nearly crushed her ; when it came she fell to the floor in a dead swoon ; I never knew her to swoon before, not even at the death of her nearest and dearest. And ever since that blow fell, she has looked just as you see her now."

"She seemed cheerful last night."

"For the first time since the news came ; it was not a healthy cheerfulness ; only the excitement of your arrival ; that was all ; this morning she was as low as ever."

"I wish I could arrive every day, then. But maiden aunt, what was the blow that fell upon her ?"

"My dear, it was the sudden death of her only brother, to whom she had been once fondly attached, but with whom she had quarrelled many years ago ; and from whom she has held herself aloof ever since ! Poor mamma thinks now that she was wrong from the beginning, and very wrong of late, in rejecting his repeated overtures for a reconciliation."

"But why was she so implacable ?"

"She did not approve of the life he led, my dear."

"And what sort of a life was that ?"

"I do not know, Ettie ! But I do know that mamma suffers very much ! Oh ! it is dreadful ! dreadful ! to hear of the death of a dear brother, to whose earnest en-



treaties for reconciliation we have returned only disdainful answers!"

"Poor, splendid grandmother!"

"And now, Ettie, I have something to tell you! Do you know that this death has made it necessary for us all to take a long journey? We should have started before this, had we not waited for your arrival. I suppose we shall go now in a very few days."

"Another journey! Oh!" exclaimed Ettie, and in despite the gravity of the occasion, she was delighted.

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## CHAPTER LIV.

### IN THE CHAMBER OF DOOM.

Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,  
Not once had glanced to either side—  
Not once did those sweet eyelids close,  
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose;  
But round their orbs of deepest blue  
The circling white, dilated grew—  
And there with stony gaze she stood,  
As ice were in her curdled blood.—*Byron.*

WE left Astrea, standing like a destroying angel over the prostrate form of Rumford.

Venus, from her lair under the bed, had witnessed, without fully comprehending, all that passed. She now emerged from her place of concealment, inquiring with a scared look:

"Hi, honey, what you hit him with?—Not de poker, 'cause dere it stan's; you must a hit him wid somefin dough! You's done for him, any ways, an' sarve him right—ole scamp! I's sorry for him too! poor forsook ole sinner, gone 'traight to de debil widout a minute to 'pent of his sins! No help for it dough! It was de onliest way to save yourself! It get you into heap o' trouble, I's 'fraid



dough, chile! Dey have you up to court, sure's ever you're born! But you aint tell me yet, what you hit him wid?— Oh! laws a messy on top o' my poor ole black soul!" she suddenly broke off and exclaimed, as she happened to look up from the prostrate body of Rumford to the avenging form of Astrea. There she yet stood in the same attitude in which she had pronounced the doom of Rumford—her form dilated and elevated, her head thrown back, her hair streaming behind, her arm raised on high, her terrible eyes fixed upon her fallen victim—there she stood, an awful and majestic presence, but turned to a lifeless statue!

"My goodness gracious me *alive*! What de matter wid her? Honey! chile! Zora, I say! Miss Zora! Miss Astrea, I mean! Mrs. Full Grebille, den! Speak to me, honey. Answer me! It's I, Wenus! your frien' Wenus, chile! What de matter wid you?" cried the woman, going slowly round and round Astrea, but not daring to approach too near, much less to touch her.

"Oh, Lor! she's turned to a dead corpe! She's turned to a standin' up dead corpe!" said Venus, finding that she could make no impression whatever upon this statue. And opening her throat in a succession of ear-splitting shrieks, she ran through the house, ringing all the bells, and finally sounding the alarm-bell in the hall.

This clangor was in a short time answered by the rush of all the negroes within hearing to the house. They came, some thumping at the front door and some thundering at the back one for admittance.

Venus ran distractedly from one door to the other, in her utter confusion of ideas for some time defeating her own object, and drawing more bolts instead of undrawing any; at last, however, she succeeded in opening the doors and admitting the clamoring crowd.

She now saw that it was daybreak and that the negroes were all in their working clothes, and had probably been on their way to the fields when summoned by the alarm-bell.



"What de row?"

"Is ole marse took ill?"

"De house a fire?"

"What de debil de matter?"

"Can't you speak, Wenus?"

These were some of the questions put by the excited crowd as they gathered around the affrighted woman.

"Be silent all of you! Order there!" said the voice of the overseer, who was now seen advancing through the throng—"What is the matter here? What has happened?"

"Wenus know!"

"She in de house!"

"She rung de 'larm!" were the answers given by the crowd.

"What is it, woman?" inquired the overseer, standing before Venus.

"Oh, oh, dear! Oh, Marse Steppins! Oh, sir!"

"Speak, you fool! Is your master ill? Or Zora run away again, or what is the matter?"

"Oh, dear! Oh, sir!"

"Will you speak?"

"Yes, sir; I gwine; 'deed I is!" said Venus, wringing her hands in agony.

"I'll be blasted if you don't answer me in one instant, if I don't——"

"Oh, sir! yes, sir! Oh, sir! Zora done kill ole marse an' turned to a dead corpe herself!"

"Zora killed Mr. Rumford!" echoed the overseer in horror, while the negroes stood around, dumb with consternation.

"And turned to a dead corpe herself, sir! a standin' up dead corpe horrowful to behold!"

For an instant the overseer stood gazing at the speaker in a state of petrification, and then recovering himself, with a start, he said:

"Where are they?"



"Here, sir, here! Oh, please to come in with me; I'se 'fraid o' my life to go in dere by myself," said Venus.

Steppins needed no further invitation. He hurried toward the fatal chamber, saying to the crowd of negroes that were pressing behind him:

"Back, back, all of you! except those that I call. Venus, Cybele, Saturn, Sam—come with me!"

And Steppins, followed by the four negroes he had named, entered the chamber.

As soon as the eyes of the overseer fell upon the group we have described—the awful form of Astrea standing over the prostrate body of Rumford—he paused in breathless dismay. But when some of the boldest among the party would have laid hands upon them, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Stop! I daren't touch 'em, nor allow 'em to be touched! Sam, saddle Saladin, and ride fast as ever you can and fetch Dr. Herkimer! He's a physician and a magistrate, besides being your master's nearest neighbor and most intimate friend. He is altogether the most properest person to send for."

Steppins had scarcely finished speaking before Sam started on his errand.

The messenger was excited, the horse was fleet, the distance short, and the occasion imminent.

In less than half an hour, Dr. Herkimer arrived, and was shown at once into the chamber of death.

First of all, on entering, his eyes encountered the rigid form of Astrea.

"That girl is cataleptic—not dead. Lay her on the bed, some of you!"

Venus and Cybele darted eagerly forward to obey this order.

They laid their hands upon the stony form of Astrea. And at their touch, as if it had dissolved the spell that bound her, her form relaxed, and she sank into their arms, limber, feeble, and pliable as the meekest child! As they



laid her on the bed, her eyes softened from their stony stare, and closed.

"She's not a dead corpe after all," said Venus to herself; "an' it's all de worse for her, poor dear chile, for now de law will hold of her for a-killin' of ole marse, dough she did it in self-'fence, and he richly 'sarved it! I could bite my 'fernally tongue off for tellin' on her! But den I thought she dead herself, and I so scared I had no wits about me! Never mind, dough; long as she's 'live, and has to answer for dis, I know what *I* do! I's de onliest one as saw her do it! I's de onliest witness 'gainst her! And I jes' up and 'ny ebery t'ing! and eben eat my own words! 'Deed will I!"

Venus soon had an opportunity of putting her resolutions in practice.

Dr. Herkimer knelt down beside the fallen form of Rumford, felt his pulse, and examined his face.

"This is an attack of apoplexy! Lend a hand here, Sam, and you also, Saturn, and lift your master up, and take him to his own room!"

Sam and Saturn obeyed, and Rumford was carried to his chamber, undressed, and put to bed, and freely bled, cupped, and blistered. The doctor, having done all that his medical experience could suggest for the relief of his patient, left him to be watched by Sam, and returned to the other room to look at the "cataleptic girl," as he called Astrea, and also to institute some inquiry into the immediate cause of Mr. Rumford's attack. He found Astrea in the deep sleep that often succeeds an attack of catalepsy; and, after making a careful examination, pronounced her doing as well as could be hoped; and then, consigning her to the care of old Cybele, called Venus to accompany him into the drawing-room, where the overseer and some of the principal servants were lingering to see if they could be of any use.

"My good girl," said the doctor, throwing himself into a chair, and beckoning Venus to approach and stand before



him, "I gather from the discourse of your fellow-servants that *you* were the only one of their number, with the exception of the girl Zora, who passed the night in this house, and can give any information as to the origin of your master's illness."

"Yes, sir! I dessay it *was* de oranges as made him ill! Dere was lots of dem dere billious, yellow things for de desert," said Venus, with much animation, delighted that the doctor had, as she thought, found a satisfactory solution to the mystery. "Yes," she added; "fac' is I know it *must* a' been de oranges as made him ill!"

"I am not talking of *oranges*, you blockhead! I said *origin*! I want to know the origin, that is, the *cause* of your master's sudden attack!"

"Oh, dat it! But, hi, marse doctor, how I know who 'tacked him; nobody didn't 'tack him as *I* knows of!"

"You were in the room with the girl Zora last night, I believe?"

"Yes, sir; I has slept in Zora's room long of her ebber since here she's bin!" said Venus, recklessly.

"Very well. Now, then, it was in that room that your master was found in a fit, with Zora standing over him, quite incapable of giving any explanation! Now, then, what had happened to bring about this extraordinary state of affairs? You must know, since you were there present all the time!"

"Hi, marse doctor, how *I* gwine know, when I soun' asleep all de time? I 'sures you, marse doctor, when de sleep *do* come ober me, I can't keep awake—no, not ef de house was a burnin' up, an' me in it!" said Venus, earnestly.

"Yet you must have heard something of this, else how came you to give the alarm?"

"Oh, yes, marse doctor! while I was soun' asleep, I hear somefin heavy fall down—flump-bung-de-lung—and shake de whole house! and den I look out, and dere lay ole marse, fallen down for dead! Dere! dat all I know about it!"



"But the girl Zora, who was standing over him in that threatening attitude?"

"Oh, yes, marse doctor! you see Zora was sleepin' in the arm-chair, same as me sleepin' on de mattress. And when she hear dat flump-bung-de-lung fall down and shake de house, she jump up same time as I did! Only, you see, she was struck all of a heap, and I had my senses about me, and so I rung de 'larm and brought all de people. And dat is all I knows about it!"

"Why, then, did you say that Zora had killed your master?"

"Hi, marse doctor, sir, who go tell you that false? Who say I say it?" inquired Venus, with a look of righteous indignation.

"All your fellow-servants."

"Lor', marse doctor, you needn't b'lieve dem niggers! Dey say ebery ting but deir prayers."

"Then you didn't tell this story upon Zora?"

"Who, *me*? How I gwine tell it when it wasn't *true*? I neber eben thought o' such a thing, marse doctor, sir! All dem niggers' 'fernally falses!"

"Take care, Venus, how you deny your own words, and slander your companions. Remember it was to *me* you told this tale, in the presence of others!" said the overseer, joining in the conversation.

"Oh, Marse Steppins, sir, you neber was more 'stakin in your life, sir. 'Deed and 'deed, and 'deed, and 'deed, I neber said nothin' like it, sir!" persisted Venus, with an astonished look and an emphatic earnestness that made the overseer doubt the evidence of his own senses of memory.

"The fact is, I suppose, the poor creature was so frightened that she did not know what she said," suggested the doctor.

"That's it! She did look as wild as a witch," admitted the overseer.

"Then she is not to be held responsible for them, I sup-



pose. She is certainly honest in making the declaration she does now. And really I think she is not very capable of giving any more lucid account of the affair than she has already given. You may retire, my girl," said the doctor; and as soon as Venus had gone, he added:

"The cause of Mr. Rumford's attack is easy enough understood. That late dinner! He has been for years predisposed to apoplexy. And I have warned him against late and heavy dinners and suppers! but quite in vain, as you know, Steppins. I saw how it must end, and it has ended just as I expected!"

"How is he, sir? Is there any hope?"

"He breathes! And while there is breath there is life, and while there is life there is hope! Nevertheless, I say to you, Steppins, that if he has any near relations, they ought to be summoned immediately."

"I will go to the city and telegraph to them directly, sir."

"Also, Steppins, if he has not already settled up his worldly affairs, his solicitor ought to be sent for instantly, to remain at the house in the event of his being wanted; for the patient may possibly have an interval of consciousness, in which he may be able to make his will."

"Exactly, sir! I will endeavor to bring Mr. Fulmer out with me."

"And 'last, but not least,' a clergyman should be in constant attendance at his bedside, to watch for the opportunity, and offer him such religious aids as the parting soul of sinful man requires!"

"Ah, sir, a death-bed offers but a short space to repent of a long lifetime's sins!" sighed the overseer.

"And he has led a wild life, you will say! true, but then he had a kind heart, and—who dares to limit the mercy of the All-Merciful? The repentant thief on the cross was pardoned."

"Well, sir, I will fetch the minister, and hope for the best."



"And the quicker you set about the whole of this business you have undertaken to do, the better."

"Exactly, sir! Good day," said the overseer, picking up his hat and retiring.

When he reached the hall he found the gaping crowd of negroes still lingering there, and said:

"Boys, every one of you go to your work in the east field. Sam, do you put the horses to the brougham, and bring it around to the door immediately, and get ready yourself to drive me to the city."

The negroes all dispersed to obey these orders, while Steppins walked to his own cottage to put on his Sunday clothes.

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## CHAPTER LV.

### THE OLD HOUSE CHANGES OWNERS.

Nothing in his life,  
Became him like his leaving it. He died  
As one that had been studied in his death,  
To throw away the dearest thing he owned  
As 'twere a careless trifle.  
About the hour of eve, which he himself  
Foretold would be his last, full of repentance,  
Continual meditations, tears, and sorrows,  
He gave his riches to the world again,  
His blessed part to Heaven, and slept in peace.—*Shakespeare.*

MEANWHILE the doctor returned to watch beside his patient.

It was a dreary and a hopeless watch, which lasted all through the forenoon, until the return of Steppins from the city, bringing with him Lawyer Fulmer and the Reverend Mr. Palmer.

These gentlemen were met in the hall by Dr. Herkimer, and after a short interview, in which the doctor put them in possession of the facts of the case so far as they were



known to himself, they all went into the sick room, and took up their watch by the dying man. To the most inexperienced observer it was evident he was sinking fast.

They watched eagerly for some such sign of returning consciousness as the delirious or comatose patient often exhibits just before death. For some time they watched in vain—his pallid and sunken face, rolling head, wandering fingers, and inarticulate murmurs, gave but little hope that he would ever speak a word or recognize a face again.

At length, however, when it was late in the evening, a change came over him. He opened his eyes, looked around, and knew the friends that stood about him. He was quite cognizant of his situation, for he beckoned feebly for the physician to stoop low, and whispered :

*"Doctor, this is death !"*

"Oh no, you are better," said the physician, telling the usual benevolent story.

A sad shake of the head was the only answer of the dying man, who with another feeble effort beckoned the other two gentlemen to draw near. When they had approached quite close, he faltered forth :

"The girl Zora—must be free."

"Had you not better dictate a will, sir?" inquired the lawyer.

A silent shake of the head was the only reply.

"There is no time," whispered Dr. Herkimer to the lawyer, "he has not half an hour's life in him ! and what he has left, short as it is, should be devoted to prayer."

Not a word of this speech reached the patient's ear ; yet the same thought was evidently passing in his own mind, for he looked wistfully in the face of the minister.

Mr. Palmer stooped down to hear what he wished to speak.

"I have been a bad servant ! What will the Great Master say to me ?"

The minister took his nearly pulseless hand, and spoke



to him of the infinite mercy of the Father; of the perfect atonement of the Son; of the free grace offered to the greatest sinner who repents, even at the eleventh hour.

Rumford, with all his faults, had never been harsh, implacable, or unforgiving. This softness of heart, preserved even in the midst of a life of reckless vices, rendered him more impressible by religious truth, more receptive of divine grace, and more affected by the infinite love revealed in the atonement. Broken, subdued, helpless, dying, he was melted into tears.

Seeing this, the minister knelt by his bed, and prayed earnestly to heaven for the repentance, pardon, and salvation of this sinner. The dying man clasped his hands and silently accompanied the minister in this prayer. And when at last Mr. Palmer arose from his knees and looked upon the patient, he saw that the soul had already passed, leaving the dead hands clasped in prayer for pardon, and the dead face still wet with the tears of penitence.

"He is gone," said the doctor, with his finger on the dead man's pulse.

"May peace be with him," murmured the minister, as he gently closed the sightless eyes.

"You are witnesses, gentlemen, to his expressed will in regard to the girl Zora," said the lawyer, as he left the chamber of death to give orders concerning the funeral. For in that hot climate short space is allowed between death and burial.



## CHAPTER LVI.

## THE LAST VISION.

But, soft : behold ! lo, where it comes again !

———Stay illusion !

If thou hast any sound, or use a voice,

———Speak to me !—*Shakespeare.*

THAT night, while the body of Rumford was lying in state in the front room, and Astrea was lying upon the bed in her own dark, still chamber, and sleeping that fitful sleep that precedes fever, she was for the third time the subject of a strange vision. As upon the two former occasions, her closed eyelids were penetrated by a cool, subtile flame that compelled her to open her eyes, when she saw standing within a halo of light the beautiful image of Lulu, with the dark blot effaced from her shining robes, the restored star blazing in the centre of her crown, and her once mournful countenance now radiant with divine joy ! For an instant only she stood thus, and then smiling, faded in music away, singing as she vanished the refrain of some heavenly song, the burden of which was "Saved ! All saved !"

And the next moment the room was in total silence, deep darkness, and perfect solitude again. And Astrea's wild eyes were wide open, and gazing into the thick blackness whence the bright image had vanished. What was it ? A dream ? a vision ? a reality ? She could not tell ! She only felt that there were mysteries in spirit life, unfathomable by human intellect.

The next day, for the reasons already stated, the funeral of Rumford took place. It was a clear, bright summer's morning, the weather was fine, the air fresh, and, more than that, the deceased planter had been very popular in the neighborhood, "known for a good fellow all over the country," as he himself had said ; consequently his funeral was very largely attended. A long cortege of carriages followed



him to the cemetery, on the rising ground, a mile above the plantation house.

Many of the guests returned to partake of the funeral dinner, at which the confidential solicitor of the deceased presided. Then, as there was no will to be found, they all dispersed to their various homes—all except Dr. Herkimer, who was stopped by old Cybele, who said:

“Marse doctor, sir, I wish how you’d come in an’ look at poor Zora; she aint eat nor drank nor likewise spoke since she had that cattypussy fit as you talked about; she jes’ lay dere half ’sleep an’ half ’wake, a-rolling of her head on de pillow, and a-mumblin’ somethin’ to herself, for all de worl’ as if she was a-conjuring or a-talkin’ to de sperits or de debil! which indeed it do put such a scare on top o’ me, as I’m feared of my soul to stay in de room ’long of her!”

While Cybele was speaking, she was leading the way to the back chamber, in which the doctor followed her.

“The girl has inflammation of the brain,” said the physician, as he felt Astrea’s full and bounding pulse, and gazed upon her flushed face and heavy eyes. “Her head must be shaved directly. Yon have a barber on the premises, I presume?”

“Oh, yes, Marse Doctor. Sam a good barber, he allus shave ole marse, and trim his hair, too, likewise de trees in de garden,” answered Cybele.

“Go, then, and tell Sam what is wanted, and order him to prepare his razors and come here immediately.”

Cybele departed, and while she was gone, the doctor took from his pocket the calomel pills that he always carried about him, and raising the head of the half conscious but docile sufferer, made her swallow two of them.

Cybele soon re-entered the chamber, followed by Sam, bearing all the apparatus of hair-cutting and shaving.

Astrea was lifted up in the arms of old Cybele, who sat behind her and supported her, while Sam cut off her hair, which fell—a rich and glossy black mass—upon the bed be-



fore the doctor's eyes. Dr. Herkimer picked a portion of it up, to examine it, as one does any beautiful object. Presently he exclaimed :

"Why, how is this? This girl's hair is golden near the roots!"

Sam stopped in his process of lathering, and old Cybele also bent forward to look. The three heads were bent in curiosity over Astrea's beautiful tresses. Yes, it was certainly as the doctor had said. Every raven hair was tipped near the root with a spark of gold. This, of course, was the new growth coming out in its natural color. But they did not understand it.

"I should be inclined to think that her hair was originally golden, but that she had dyed it; only she is so much too dark to have light hair. I cannot make it out at all; it is quite a phenomenon!" the doctor exclaimed. And the three pairs of eyes gazed upon the "phenomenon," until Dr. Herkimer said :

"Go on with your work, Sam; what the mischief are you stopping for?"

Sam obeyed, and in a short time the stately little head was shaved as clean as the face, and looked so much whiter, as to draw the attention of the doctor, who put on his spectacles to scrutinize it, as he said :

"Well, the scalp, being protected by the hair, is always a little whiter than the face! But here is so marked a difference as to indicate something very abnormal, particularly when considered in connection with the golden roots of the hair. I cannot make it out at all!

Neither, of course, could any of his hearers. But had Venus been present she might have given them the clue.

Towels dipped in ice-water were now wrapped around the sufferer's head, which was once more laid upon the pillow.

Sam gathered up his barber's tools and left the room, carrying with him the rich, black hair, which he knew he could sell for a good price to the city barber with whom he dealt.



"You are too old to be trusted to nurse this girl. You could not sit up at night to give her medicine regularly. You would fall asleep. Where is that woman that I saw about here yesterday?" said the doctor to Cybele.

"Lor, marse doctor, cleanin' away de dinner-table an' puttin' de house to rights arter all dis bustle. A body wants de place to look a little decent 'gainst ole marser's 'lations come."

"Well, you had better attend to that matter yourself, and send Venus here to me."

The doctor was always promptly obeyed, and Venus soon entered the room, dropping a courtesy, and saying:

"'Deed, Marse doctor, sir, I thanks you berry much for sendin' for me; 'cause I'se been long o' dat chile for a mont' or more, an' knows all her ways same as if I was her mammy; an' so you see I's de most properest person for to nurse her."

"You know all her ways?"

"Yes, Marse doctor, sir."

"Did she dye her hair?"

"Lor, no, Marse doctor! Why?"

"It is coming out golden at the roots, that's all!"

"DE LORS!—" cried Venus, suddenly recollecting what Astrea had told her concerning the mystery of her change of complexion; but recollecting at the same time her own promise to be silent upon the subject until Astrea should give her leave to speak.

"You are sure she doesn't dye her hair?"

"Who—*She*! No, indeed, Marse doctor, I's sartin sure she doesn't! What call *she* to dye her bootful hair? 'Taint gray, nor likewise red! So why dye?"

"Why, certainly? Well, I cannot comprehend it!—But now, my good woman, I must give you some directions as to the treatment of your patient through the night," said the doctor, and hereupon he gave her the most careful instructions, to which Venus listened with the deepest attention.



"And now, my girl," he said, as he took up his hat to go, "I hope you understand all that I have said to you?"

"Ebery singly word, Marse doctor, sir!—But please tell me, sir, when you think de new marser an' missus be here?" inquired Venus, anxiously.

"If they start immediately and come by land, they may be here in eight or ten days. If they come by water, the Ohio and Mississippi rivers are both so low that they may be three weeks on their way. And if they delay their departure there is no telling when they may arrive."

With this answer Venus had to be satisfied; for the doctor immediately left the house.

Astrea's illness was long and dangerous. For eight days she lay hovering between life and death—and alternating between delirium and stupor. The doctor came twice a day, and taxed his utmost skill to save her life. Venus sat up with her every night; and left her only for a few hours' sleep during the day, when the watch was relieved by old Cybele.

Venus kept herself awake at night with strong green tea.

On the evening of the eighth day the doctor, standing looking over the patient, said:

"This night will decide her fate! She will either awaken in the full possession of her senses, or she will sink into the coma that precedes death!"

And having given the nurse instructions how to proceed in either event, he took his leave.

Venus sat down beside the bed where the awful struggle of life and death was silently going on. And during that fearful night-watch the faithful creature scarcely once removed her eyes from the sufferer's face.

Poor Venus, through watching, and caring for, and sympathizing with Astrea, had come to love her best in all the world. And now she watched this terrible crisis with something like the intense anxiety that a mother feels for her sick child.



After midnight there was a change in the patient; a cool and gentle perspiration came out upon her forehead. And the heart of Venus beat fast with hope, until she happened to recollect that there was such a thing as death-damp upon the brow of the dying, and this might be it! and her head sank with fear. She listened for the patient's breathing—it was soft and deep. She felt her pulse—it was quiet and regular. Venus's heart rose again. While the poor creature was undergoing these agues and fevers of hope and fear, the night was slowly passing away.

At length, when the nurse-lamp was going out and the daylight was coming in, Astrea calmly unclosed her eyes, and looked at Venus.

Venus was too intensely excited to speak; she could only open her mouth, and hold her breath. She was afraid to move, lest her slightest motion might dissolve the charm of convalescence, and send her patient back again into the night of death.

At length, after serenely contemplating her nurse for a few moments, Astrea, in a small, feeble, thread-like voice, spoke, and said:

"Venus——"

"Thank de Lor'!" exclaimed the woman.

"But, Venus."

"And thank *you, too*, honey, for coming to life!"

"Yes; but, Venus, how came I here?"

"Here, honey?"

"Yes; here, in this bed! Did you undress and put me here?"

"Yes, honey, of course I did."

"But, why? Did I go to sleep while sitting watching in my chair?" she inquired, striving to recall the events of that last night of her consciousness—then, with sudden, though but imperfect memory, she exclaimed, "Oh, heaven! I remember! I remember!"

"Now, don't you go for 'sturb your mind, chile. Thank de Lor' as you're alive."



"I remember! I remember! When that wicked man wrested the dagger from my hand, and had me at his mercy, I fainted with horror!"

Venus, who most distinctly recollected that Astrea had done any thing else but faint, upon the occasion referred to, now opened her eyes with astonishment.

"Yes, I remember quite well that my heart stopped, my eyes failed, and I lost consciousness! I can remember nothing after that. Oh, Venus, what happened next? The man left the room without further molesting me, did he not? Bad as he was, he would not injure a helpless, swooning woman! Oh, answer, Venus! he left the room, did he not?"

"Yes, honey, certney, to be sure he did, *immediate*," replied Venus, who supposed it would be the correct thing to agree to all her patient said.

"And then you undressed me, and put me to bed?"

"Yes, honey, that I did, *good*."

"And you have been sitting by me and watching me ever since?"

"Every blessed minute since."

"And never left me for a moment?"

"No, nor for a *half* a moment nyther."

"I hope that man has not been in here again?"

"No, honey, you may take your davy that he hasn't. Nor thought of it nyther."

"Venus!"

"What, honey?"

"It was three o'clock this morning when that man came in, and frightened me so?"

"Yes, chile."

"And now it is—it must be near six?"

"True, honey."

"Then I have been lying in this state of unconsciousness for three hours?"

"Yes, honey; and 'haps a little longer."

"And, oh, Venus, I am so weak! It is a trouble to



breathe, and a greater trouble to speak. My breath flutters downward like the flame of a candle that is going out."

"Don't you let it, honey! for goodness gracious sake hold that same candle steady till I fetches you something!" exclaimed the nurse in great alarm, as she hastily poured out and brought to her patient a strengthening and composing mixture.

Astrea drank it, and fell into a light, easy, natural sleep. Poor Venus dropped upon her knees, and fervently thanked heaven for this restored life; but quite forgot to ask forgiveness for all the fibs she had told.

Dr. Herkimer, anxious for this supposed "poor girl's" fate, came very early in the morning, and after seeing his patient, pronounced her quite out of danger and doing well.

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## CHAPTER LVII.

### MYSTERY.

Mystery magnifies danger,  
As a fog the sun.—*Colton.*

ASTREA'S convalescence was rapid. She possessed one of those fine, elastic constitutions that easily rebound from depression and lightly throw off debility. As she grew well enough to observe what was passing around her, she began to discover that something unusual had occurred, that a serious change had taken place in the family. She no longer heard Rumford's voice or step; but the negroes walked about with greater liberty and conversed with more freedom.

What had happened?

That he was not ill, she knew, because his room, next to her own, was unoccupied.

By little and little she first began to suspect, and then



to know, that the planter was dead, and that his heirs were soon expected to arrive.

By the same slow process she gradually came to the knowledge that she had been ill of a brain fever for many days. And she inferred that Rumford must have died during her own illness.

Hitherto she had vainly sought to gain any correct information from Venus.

Venus had either evaded her questions or else answered them with what she considered, under the circumstances, justifiable falsehood. No one is perfect, and the reader already knows that Venus, notwithstanding all her other good traits of character, had a supreme contempt for Truth, which she seemed to consider, like fire, a good servant, but a bad master; a thing to be regarded or contemned as it promoted or retarded the interests of her friends. With this untutored and unregenerated child of nature, *friendship* ranked first, and every thing that interfered with that was sacrificed. Thus she had told lie upon lie to save Astrea; and thus she had told lie upon lie to compose her spirits and aid her convalescence. Nor had Venus one single twinge of conscience for doing so. On the contrary, she would have had many twinges of conscience if she had *not* done so. But then Venus was not enlightened.

Astrea understood all this, at length, and forbore to question Venus farther until such a time as she thought she should hear the truth. And meanwhile she noted all the chance conversation of the servants who passed her door. And as the weather was extremely warm, and the door was always open, and the passage of the servants very frequent, she soon gathered a great mass of incoherent information.

At length, when she was so very much better she could not doubt even Venus would no longer hesitate to tell her the truth, she resolved to question her.

So one morning, after Venus had brought her breakfast, and seen her eat it with good appetite, Astrea said :



"I am nearly well now, Venus."

"Yes, honey, thank Marster."

"And now I hope you will keep nothing from me longer."

"Hi, chile, what I keep from you?"

"Many things—and first, the death of Mr. Rumford. Now then, I want you to tell me all about it, Venus."

"Hi, chile, don't you know?"

"How should I? You know that from the time he disarmed me and had me at his mercy, I swooned with terror, and passed from that swoon into a brain fever, and knew nothing more for eight or nine days, when I came to myself. Then, in a few more days, I learned from the gossip of the negroes that their master was dead. Now, how and when did he die?"

"Hi, honey, is all you tell me *jés so*? Don't you know nothing as happened arter he wrung dat little dagger out'n your hand?"

"Nothing whatever, Venus; I must have swooned immediately."

"Den, sure's I's a libin' sinner, de brain feber done burned it all out'n your head. And 'deed 'taint Venus as is gwine to 'stress your feelin's by tellin' of you how much hand you had in that business," said the woman to herself.

"But you have not told me about Rumford's death."

"Well, honey, you know how he had dat dinner party, an' sat drinkin', an' boozin', an' singin' of songs, wid de other riporates, till all hours of de night an' mornin'——"

"I know that, Venus; I want to hear about his death."

"Hi, honey, aint I a tellin' of you? Well, when de party broke up, an' de gem'n lef' an' went 'way, he come, he do, into your room in a state of intoxication——"

"Yes, yes, I know that; but his death?"

"Lor', chile, aint I comin' to dat? Well, you see, arter all dat fuss he made long o'you, and arter he twistified de dagger out'n your hand, he laid himself back ag'in de wall,



he did, an' he laughed, an' laughed, until he hev t'roat into de hiccups, an' hev his blood to his head, and hev hisself into an applepesky fit; which he died of it in 'bout twelve hours' time; an' which dey *do* say he 'pented of his sins an' died praying; hopes 'twas true!"

Astrea made no reply; she was silent for some time; she could not hear the death of her dreaded enemy thus confirmed without strong, conflicting emotions—joy at the event that released her from an impending fate more horrible than death; compunction for this seeming selfish joy; and awe at the suddenness of the summons that had called away this soul—

"Cut off even in the blossom of his sins,  
Unhousel'd, unanointed, unanneal'd,  
No reckoning made, but sent to his account  
With all his imperfections on his head."

And when she did speak, it was to change the subject.

"I hear the servants talk of the expected arrival of their master's relations. Who are they?"

"Hi, honey, how I know who his 'lations is? No great things, you may depend; else how dey be *his* 'lations? Dey some poor trash or other. 'Deed I aint gwine to demean myself with makin' no 'quiries 'bout dem. No more aint ole Aunt Cybele, nor ole Uncle Saturn. *We* 'members how *we* 'longed to de ole set, de 'Gregors; an' none o' dese poor white herrins from out yonder, nobody knows where! I right glad marse doctor ordered me offin de duty o' cleanin' de house for 'em, an' ordered me on de duty o' nursin' of *you*; cause I had no stomach for no work for ole marse, nor likewise for his 'lations."

"Venus, you should not carry your resentment beyond the grave."

"What dat, honey?"

"I mean you should not continue to hate your old master now he is dead!"

"But I *does*, chile, an' I can't help of it! An' I hates him worse dan rank p'ison. Dere! I don't wish him no



harm, dough! 'deed don't *I*! I wishes of him well 'nough! I hopes he gone to Heben. 'Cause why? 'Cause you see, chile, I's such a sinner, an' can't 'pent, nor mend my ways, dat I do really 'spect how I shall go to de debil myself, some day; not dat I think de debil is half as bad as he's made out to be; but still I 'spects to go to him; an' 'deed I shouldn't like to meet ole marse dere; it would sort o' make de place feel worse, so I hopes he *did* 'pent an' go to Heben!"

"Oh, Venus, how irreverent you are!"

"What dat, honey?"

"How profane."

"Hi, honey, what I jes' tell you? I *know* it chile, an' can't help of it; dat's de reason I say I gwine to the debil."

"No, Venus; I am sure you will not be so lost. You will be gathered into the Lord's fold, some day. And now, my kind nurse, I must thank you for all your devotion to me during my illness; devotion that I truly believe saved my life," said Astrea, earnestly.

"Yes, honey—didn't I fetch you through handsome, though? Why, Lors, chile, I wouldn't trust a singly soul to sit up 'long o' you at night but my precious self. I wouldn't let de sleepyhead overcome me once nyther: I dranked green tea till all was blue! an' it kept my two eyes stretched as if dey had been prop' open wid straws," said Venus, with pride and delight.

"I know it, my dear woman; and I would repay you with something better than vain words, if I were now what I once was."

"Hi, honey—what I want wid repay? I's glad to my heart as you've got well! And as to you not bein' what you once was, you's comin' on to dat same fast!"

"What do you mean, Venus?"

"I mean, chile, how you is come to yourself in more ways dan one. First, 'bout nine days arter you had been



lyin' unsensible, you come to your *senses*! An' now you's comin' to your *'plexion*!"

"What! Venus?"

"Yes, honey! Dey can't come dat game now! Dey can't pass you off for a 'latto or a quadroon or any other sort 'roon any longer! You jes' look at yourself in de lookin' glass."

And so saying, Venus went to the window, and opened the shutters, and then lifted the heavy toilet mirror bodily off the dressing table, and lugged it toward the bed.

Hitherto the chamber had been kept in the subdued light most agreeable to the weak vision of an invalid recovering from brain fever. Hitherto, also, Astrea had not looked in a glass.

Now, therefore, when she saw her face reflected in the mirror that Venus sat before her, she uttered a cry of joy. She had recovered her own complexion. Her illness, and the sudorifics she had taken, had thrown off by perspiration the false brown that had tinged the purity of her skin; she was now as fair as a white camelia; her surprise and delight had also called up a rosy flush to her colorless cheeks, and a brilliant light to her eyes. So that the image now reflected from the glass was that of her own true, radiant countenance.

"But my hair!" she said, snatching off the little cambric cap that covered her head. She knew, of course, by missing it, that her hair had been shaved off. But she had not reflected that it must necessarily grow out in its natural color again. It was, therefore, with another thrill of bliss she looked upon the young growth of fine, soft, pale gold hair that covered her queenly little head.

"Dere, now, you see, honey—no passin' o' you off for any sort o' a 'roon now!"

"No, I think not, Venus; but I must write immediately to my friends; for now at least, Venus, you can procure for me some writing materials, and afterward take my letter to the post-office."



"Now look here, honey, how I gwine do dat? Ebery singly pen, ink, and paper done been gathered up an' locked in ole marse secretary, an' a seal as big as a dinner plate put on de keyhole; an' as for takin' o' a letter to de mail pos'-office, eben s'posin' you had any thing to write one wid, dat's out'n de question, 'cause all we colored people forbid to leave de place till ole marse's 'lations 'rive, blame 'em! But howsever, honey, don't you 'sturb yourself if you can't write just now. When de new marse comes, you jes' tell him all about yourself, an' den when he see your fair skin an' goold hair, he 'blige to believe you, for he can't go for to 'tend to say *now* as you's a 'roon," said Venus, as she took up the mirror, carried it back, and replaced it on the dressing table.

Some days passed, and still the expected relatives of the deceased had not arrived.

"'Haps dey has not got money enough to fetch 'em, de poor white trash," said Venus.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

### ARRIVAL OF AN OLD FRIEND.

It gives me wonder, great as my content,  
To see you here before me!—*Shakespeare.*

A WEEK slipped away and Astrea was well enough to leave her room. She went over the house, and found that Rumford's servants, by way of recommending themselves to the new master, had given it a thorough renovation, and made it really pleasant. Astrea, with a convalescent's eagerness for out-doors, wandered all day long about the grounds. She had no one to restrain or advise her, and so she went out early and stayed out late every day, until at



last, in her feeble condition, she took a cold, that once more confined her to her room.

It was late one afternoon that she was sitting in the easy chair, beside the back window of her chamber, watching the crimson, purple, and golden clouds that canopied so royally the setting sun, when she heard the sound of wheels upon the drive, and presently afterward the noise of a large arrival. There were two carriages stopped before the door, and discharged their passengers; then followed the entrance of many people into the hall; the sound of soft, silvery voices, mingled with rougher tones; and the thumping down of many heavy trunks and boxes upon the floor. By these "tokens true" Astrea felt sure that the new master and his family had arrived.

Some of the party went up-stairs, and their trunks were carried up behind them.

Others—ladies they seemed—went into the front chamber adjoining her own. Here their silvery voices were once more heard giving directions where their trunks and boxes must be placed. Their words and tones in speaking to the servants were gentle and courteous. That argued well of them. Some time passed, in which it seemed that they changed their travelling dresses; and then all went out together and entered the drawing-room. Next Astrea heard the servants carrying in the tea, and then "the soft tinkling of silver spoons upon china saucers," and the cheery voices that usually are heard around the tea-table. An hour passed thus, and then she heard the same servants remove the tea service. And then in a few minutes, to her great relief, Venus entered the room, bringing her supper.

"So dey's come at last," said Venus, as she set the cup of coffee and plate of buttered toast beside Astrea; "and, honey, I takes back all I ever said agin 'em, even if dey *are* ole marse's 'lations, deed I do."

"Then you like the new master?" Astrea inquired.

"Honey, de new marse is a *missus*, an' a proper lady,



too, as 'haves herself *like* a lady, an' knows how to treat human creeturs *as sich*, an' not as dogs."

"Who is she, and what is her name?"

"Hi, honey, how I know who she is, more'n she's ole marser's heiress? An' as for her name, I aint heerd it yet."

"Who are those with her? There seem to be several ladies; who are they?"

"Her chillun, honey, her chillun; she's deir moder, dough she do look more like deir sister."

Astrea, with the interest natural to one in her position, asked many more questions about the newly-arrived party, and when they had been satisfactorily answered, feeling weak and weary, she retired to bed. Venus, who still occupied her place on the mattress beside Astrea's bedstead, soon followed her example. About ten o'clock she heard the ladies enter the adjoining room and go to rest. Then, as nothing more disturbed her during the night, she went to sleep.

Early in the morning, Astrea, feeling much recovered, arose and dressed herself. She was, in truth, very anxious to be introduced as soon as possible to the new mistress, so as to tell her story, if perchance it might gain credit, and thus to learn her fate.

Venus, as usual, brought her breakfast to her room, and told her that the new mistress and her party were also at breakfast in the dining-room.

Astrea drank her chocolate and ate her muffin, and then awaited with impatience an opportunity of speaking to the new proprietor. From time to time, during the morning, Venus put her head in at the door to report progress. Once she said:

"Missus done sent pos' haste for de lawyer." And another time she announced:

"Marse Lawyer Fulmore done 'rived; an' he and de madam in de parlor sittin' at de centre table wid a whole raft o' papers before dem."



Upon another occasion she looked in and said :

“ Missus readin’ over a list of field hands.” Late in the afternoon she came into the room and announced :

“ De lawyer is gone. De madam an’ de young ladies is in de parlor. De madam been lookin’ over a list of de house servants, an’ has had ebery one of us up before her, one at a time, to speak to and get ’quainted wid, like. An’ now she has jes ax for de girl Zora, which she means *you*, honey, an’ she wants you to come in immediate.”

“ She is in the parlor, you said ?” inquired Astrea, rising.

“ Sittin’ in dere wid de young ladies.”

Astrea went for a moment to the glass, smoothed her hair, adjusted her dress, and passed directly to the parlor.

As she entered, her eyes fell upon a striking group. Upon the sofa that stood between the two front windows, was seated a stately and beautiful woman, whose bright golden hair, and fair, radiant complexion, were well set off by her rich mourning-dress. Beside her, and leaning caressingly upon her shoulder, sat a lovely young girl, who, in features and complexion, so closely resembled the lady, that strangers would have taken them for sisters. Upon a cushion at the lady’s feet, sat a little, dark, sparkling kind of a creature, whose crimson cheek rested upon the lady’s lap, but whose head was nearly concealed by a fall of glittering jet-black ringlets. This girl raised her brilliant black eyes for a moment to look at the new-comer.

And with a sudden cry, she sprung to her feet and ran across the floor, exclaiming :

“ Why, that is Daney ! That is Astrea ! That is Mrs. Fulke Greville !” Then, as if unable to advance another step, or speak another word, Ettie Burns, for of course it was herself, stopped short in breathless astonishment and joy.



## CHAPTER LIX.

## RECOVERY.

"Turn gentle lady,  
Our Perdita's found."—*Shakespeare.*

"OH, Ettie! Ettie Burns!" exclaimed Astrea, hurrying forward—"have you come from Heaven to save me?"

"No, I came from New York with my splendid grand-mamma! But where did *you* come from? How came *you* away down here in this out-of-the-way place? *I never!*"

"Ettie, I was forcibly abducted and brought here. I have been kept in restraint ever since, and not even been permitted to write to my friends!"

"Well—I—never! Here *is* a go! Do you know, Astrea, that many people believe you to have been murdered, and that Colonel Greville——" Here Ettie abruptly paused in her speech, frightened by the sudden paleness of Astrea, and conscious that she had nearly said too much, for she had been on the point of adding, "has been arrested for your murder."

"Colonel Greville! Oh, what of Colonel Greville, Ettie?" eagerly questioned Astrea.

"Won't believe a word about your having been killed, you know! And neither will the Captain!"

"And are they well? oh, Ettie! are they well?"

"Why, yes; as well as anybody could hope them to be and you away!"

"My husband, Ettie! oh, is he in good health?"

"As hearty as possible under the circumstances, I tell you."

"And my dear old guardian! oh, he *is* old! Are you sure he does not fail?"

"Not—one—bit! He looks as if he might live a half century longer! though that would be a pity for him too,



for I—do—know—that when Captain William Fuljoy dies, he'll go right straight to heaven, without even being asked to show his ticket!"

"All well! All well! Oh, thank Heaven!" said Astrea, fervently—"but, Ettie, if they did not believe I was murdered, how did they account for my absence?"

"They thought that you had been stolen away! And they put advertisements in all the papers, and they offered large rewards for any information about you! and, oh, dear! here's another go!"

"What, dear Ettie?"

"Why *I* shall get the reward because *I* have found you! And, oh! it is ever so many thousand dollars! Because Colonel Greville, and Captain Fuljoy, and Madame de Glacie, all put in, I do suppose."

"Madame de Glacie, my dear? Who is Madame de Glacie?"

"Oh, crickey! but then of course you don't know! she's your mamma, that you were stolen away from, when you were a baby! Don't you know, you used to have a dim recollection of an old chateau and a——"

"Yes, yes, tell me about my mother!"

"Well, you see she saw your carte-de-visite in a show-window at Paris, and so she recognized it as the likeness of her daughter, and she made inquiries, and finally traced you all the way to Fuljoy's Isle, and arrived only a few days after you were missed."

"Oh, my poor mother! what a bitter disappointment!"

"Wasn't it though? Ah, but didn't she bear it like a hero, neither? I'll tell you what, she's a *brick*; and I don't believe the others could have borne up at all if it hadn't been for *her*! She kept up all their spirits! She it was who first insisted that you were not dead, and she it was who had all the advertisements put in the paper, and who employed my handsome uncle Welby Dunbar to hunt you up!"



"Welby Dunbar!" re-echoed Astrea, as the name sounded in her ears like a dim reminiscence of her childhood.

"Yes! My handsome uncle! he is here now! Oh, won't he be glad, rather though? He shan't have the reward, however, because *I* found you!"

"And do you mean to say that my mother's attorney, the gentleman she employed to seek me, is really in this house?"

"Well, he is not anywhere else," said Ettie; "and you can see him if you like!"

"Heaven be praised! But, oh, Ettie, how was it that he came? Did they get any clue to help them to trace me here?"

"Not the least little bit in the world."

"How, then, is it that he is here?"

"Chance, accident, Providence I mean! And the most natural thing in this world! You see he is my splendid grandmother's son, and my splendid grandmother is Mr. Rumford's sister and heiress, and she came down here to take possession of the property!"

"Providence indeed! But, my dear Ettie, how is it that *you* are here? I thought you a fixture at Burnstop?"

Ettie's bright face clouded over as she answered:

"My Grandfather Burns died and I was sent to my Grandmamma Greville in New York."

"Your Grandmamma Greville, my dear? I did not know that you had a grandmamma of that name."

"Of course you didn't; because you see," said Ettie, lowering her voice, confidentially, "I didn't know it myself until a little while ago, for the reason that Grandfather Burns and Grandmother Greville couldn't saddle horses together."

"Couldn't saddle horses together, Ettie?" repeated Astrea, in a perplexed and questioning tone.

"Oh, bosh! you know what I mean—they couldn't agree; and so he never mentioned her to me, till just before he died. And, oh! I say, Astrea! here's *another* go! it has just struck me!"



"What is that, my dear?"

"Why, *my* Grandmamma Greville is *your* step-mother-in-law!"

"Step-mother-in-law, Ettie!"

"Well, yes, she is slightly."

"How do you mean, dear?"

"Why, if Mrs. Greville is Colonel Greville's *step-mother*, isn't she your *step-mother-in-law*?"

"Ettie," exclaimed Astrea, in a low, and hurried voice, "do you mean to tell me that this lady is the Mrs. Courtney Greville of New York, who——"

"Well, she aint anybody else! And here she comes now herself to see what we are at!" exclaimed Ettie, as Mrs. Greville was observed to arise and approach them.

The conversation between Astrea and Ettie had gone on with great rapidity. Answer had followed question, and exclamation had followed comment with breathless vehemence. But it must not be supposed that it had been unobserved. Mrs. Greville and Lois had witnessed the meeting and the recognition at first with astonishment and stupefaction; then they had watched the exciting interview with the deepest interest. Some parts of the conversation were perfectly audible; other portions, in which the parties lowered their voices, were not so. Enough, however, had reached Mrs. Greville's ears to convince her that in this lovely young stranger Ettie had recognized the lost bride of Fuljoy's Island. Twice or thrice, from the impulses of benevolence, she had risen to approach the speakers. And as often, from scruples of delicacy, she had hesitated to intrude upon their interview. She had hoped that Ettie herself would see the propriety of presenting her friend; but when she saw that her rustic grandchild had no such intention, and when she heard her own relationship to the young stranger alluded to, thus opening a way for her graceful approach, she immediately came forward, and holding out her hand, said, in a voice tremulous with emotion, that



even *she*, practiced woman of the world, could not entirely suppress :

“ Yes, I am that Mrs. Greville, step-mother to your husband, from whom he, when a boy, in a fit of boyish pique, ran away. Through the most remarkable combination of circumstances, we have been separated and estranged ever since. But you, my dear, I hope may be the means of reuniting us. That is, if he has not taught you to hate and distrust me.”

Astrea was trembling violently ; but she answered, though in a faltering voice :

“ My husband never mentioned your name to me, Madam. But from other sources I know that the long estrangement was not of his making. As soon as he had won some honors at the college to which our uncle sent him, he wrote, most respectfully, to inform you of his success. Lady, the only answer he received to his letter was a cold line, disclaiming all knowledge of the writer. You cannot wonder that he never wrote again.”

“ I do not ! But, oh, my dear, it all grew out of the strangest freak of fortune that ever was played by a fish boy. At the very moment of writing that letter, I was firmly persuaded that my step-son was under my own roof, and that some impostor had written to me ! The story is too long to tell you now. But this much I may say : that a boy, the perfect image, counterpart, fac-simile of my son, was picked up in the streets of New York and brought to me. He was a stranger in the city. There was no one to prove his proper identity ; while there were hundreds ready to swear that he was Fulke Greville, my step-son. In a word, ever after he bore that name and held that position.”

“ An impostor ! ” broke indignantly from the lips of Astrea.

“ No, my dear ! no impostor ; but a noble souled lad, who vainly protested against the privileges, honors, and riches that were lavished upon him, declaring that he had no law-



ful right to them, until all his resistance was overborne by evidence and authority, and he was compelled to submit, at least during his minority. But after he became of age, and found himself a free agent, he seized the first opportunity of resigning a position to which he asserted he had no claim. Do you think it required no moral heroism to do that? I tell you it needed more than you know of! But I declare to you, that he *has* lost nothing and *shall* lose nothing by that act! He is the son of my affections, the betrothed of my daughter; his name is Welby Dunbar!"

"*Welby Dunbar!*" exclaimed Astrea, again struck by the familiar sound of a name that it seemed to her she ought to know. Then suddenly memory lighted up the whole subject as it lay in the past, and she smiled, saying:

"I no longer wonder, lady, at this mistake of years! As a child I came over in the same emigrant ship with Welby Dunbar. I lost him in the wilderness of New York. I was taken down to Maryland, and was eventually adopted by Captain Fuljoy, Heaven bless him! And it was while I was still at the island that Fulke came to spend his holidays there; and as soon as I saw him, so perfect was the likeness you speak of, that I declared him to be Welby Dunbar, the fish boy, and none else. And it was years, Madam, before I was disabused of this illusion."

"I am well pleased to hear you say so; for your husband will the more readily understand my own self-deception. But all this time, my dear, I am keeping you standing! Forgive my negligence, and take this seat," said the lady, conducting Astrea to an easy chair that was placed near the sofa.

"This is my daughter, Lois," she continued, presenting the young lady, who frankly extended her hand, and cordially greeted the stranger.

Mrs. Greville then rang a bell.

Venus answered it.

"Tell the girl Zora that she need not come in just now," said the lady.



Venus stared with astonishment for an instant, and then exclaimed :

“Hi, missus—dere’s Miss Zora a sittin’ in de rockin’ chair, right afore your two looking eyes, ma’am!”

“Stupid! That young lady is Mrs. Fulke Greville.”

“Yes, missus—I knows she’s Mrs. Full Grebille an’ likewise Miss Zora; leastways so dey will have it down here.”

It was now Mrs. Greville’s turn to be astonished. She turned her eyes full upon Astrea, with a look of questioning and of shuddering.

“It is true, Madam; Zora was the name given me by my abductors, after they had dyed my hair and stained my skin!”

“You have a long story to tell me, my dear.”

“Indeed, I have, Madam.”

“Venus, you may retire; but go and say to Mr. Dunbar that I would feel obliged if he would come here,” said Mrs. Greville.

Venus obeyed; and as soon as the door closed behind her, the lady turned to Astrea, and in a voice quivering with emotion, inquired :

“Oh, heaven, my child! can you re-assure me?”

“Yes, yes, dear Madam, I can! Providence has watched over me! I have been safe!”

“Thank heaven!” ejaculated the lady.

Lois opened her blue eyes, and looked from one to the other for an explanation of this short exclamatory dialogue; but at the same moment the door opened, and Welby Dunbar entered the room.

Mrs. Greville arose and met him, saying, in a low voice :

“Welby, my dear, I believe you to be a man of steady nerves, not easily surprised from your self-possession. I am about to put that to the test.”

And taking him by the hand, she led him up to the stranger, saying :

“Astrea, my love, this is my son, Mr. Dunbar; Welby,



my dear, this is the Mrs. Fulke Greville of whom you have been so long in search."

However steady Welby's nerves might have been on usual occasions, he was now certainly startled from his propriety. Instead of bowing, as he was bound to do, he started back a little, trembled, flushed, and paled, fumbled in his pocket for the miniature the Marquis de Glacie had given him, and gazed alternately upon that and the face of the original. At length, as if satisfied, he exclaimed:

"It is indeed! It must be!" And then, with an ingenuous blush, he said:

"Pray, pardon me, Madam, if the surprise, the delight, and the incredulity I experienced in this unexpected meeting, have made me forget myself."

"I have nothing to pardon in your caution; and much to be grateful for in the easy recognition that you have given me," said Astrea, gently. "But we have met before, you know. You have not forgotten little Daney on the emigrant ship?" she inquired, with a sweet smile lighting up the blue eyes that she fixed upon him.

A whirl of emotion rushed over his face. He had not forgotten; but he had never suspected that the poor, pale baby of the emigrant ship was the missing child of Madame de Glacie.

—"Because, if you *have*," she added, "I have not forgotten the fish boy who was my only friend. I do believe I should have died, if you had not fed me with oysters every day. Oh, how I cried when they carried me away!"

"And how I hunted you through New York!" said Welby, gazing still in stupefaction upon her.

"And how I scolded you in the person of Fulke Greville, whom I believed to be yourself, practising an imposition on us!" smiled Astrea.

"And now, Welby," said Mrs. Greville, "take a chair and draw up to our circle. I sent for you here, not only to meet Astrea, but also to hear the explanation she is about to give us."



Then, turning to Astrea, she continued :

“And now, my love, if you feel equal to the task, we wish you to tell us your story.”

Thus invited, Astrea related the history of her abduction, as far as it was known to herself, from the night that she was surprised in her room by the black-robed figure, who clapped the sponge of chloroform over her mouth and nose, overpowering her senses, up to the hour in which, as “Zora,” she was summoned to Mrs. Greville’s presence.

Her hearers listened with breathless interest. At the end of the story, Mrs. Greville was the first to speak.

“What a life of vicissitudes has yours been ! Born an heiress ; stolen in your infancy, and subjected to the worst evils of poverty ; adopted by a wealthy man ; married to a distinguished military officer ; torn at night from your bridal chamber ; carried to sea by pirates ; sold as a slave ; driven by desperation to the Cypress Swamp ; hunted by bloodhounds ; re-captured ; subjected to insult ; exposed to death ; and rescued only at the last moment by an unexpected stroke of Providence ! Oh, Heaven of Heavens, what a story ! You have passed through a furnace seven times heated, Astrea ! but you have come from the fire, pure as refined gold ! strong as tempered steel !”

“Now, *I* think she escaped all these dangers, as Tam O’Shanter’s mare did with the witches, with the loss of her long, flowing hair !”

“Be still, you saucy girl !” said Mrs. Greville, smiling.

Then rising, and excusing herself to Astrea, she requested Welby to attend her, and left the apartment.

When they had reached the dining-room and seated themselves, Mrs. Greville inquired :

“And now, what should be our first step ?”

“In view of what may be even now taking place in the criminal courts of Maryland, and with which it is not advisable to trouble the young lady——”

“No, no—certainly not !” put in Mrs. Greville.



——“We should act with the greatest promptitude. We should go immediately to the city, taking Mrs. Fulke Greville and Miss Burns with us, prove her identity before some magistrate, lay the whole affair before the police, and get them to send an official telegram to the authorities in Maryland to arrest proceedings against Colonel Greville. We must also send a telegram to Captain Fuljoy and to Colonel Greville, informing them of our discovery. *Then* we may write a fuller account by mail. But my idea is, that as soon as Captain Fuljoy receives the message, and Colonel Greville is set at liberty, they will hasten here.”

“That is excellent; but would it not be better for you to set out immediately with Astrea?”

“No; I am sure she could never bear the journey. She is but a feeble convalescent still.”

“True. You remember every thing, while I remember nothing.”

“But then it is my trade,” smiled Welby.

“And, my dear, as we are to go to the city to-day, the sooner we set forth the better; so I will trouble you to order the carriage, while we put on our bonnets.”

The young man left the room to comply with this request. And a few minutes afterward, Mrs. Greville, Astrea, Ettie, and Welby, were seated in the old-fashioned coach, driven by Sam, and on their way to the city. They accomplished their purpose in a few hours, and returned late in the evening.

After this, to the great delight of Venus, and to the huge astonishment of the other negroes, Astrea was elevated to her proper position in the family, and treated with the utmost respect and affection.

Venus tossed her head very high, in view of her superior information upon the subject.

“*I knowed it all along, niggers! Mrs. Full Grebille done tuk me in her conference long ago! I knowed it on de ship!*”



"Oh, yes! you knows ebery t'ing—*arter it's all found out!*" laughed old Cybele.

"Berry well, den! I knowed it arter it was all found out, did I? Now den, I gwine to tell you somefin afore it's found out, and dat is dis—how I'm gwine to be bought an' sot free by Mrs. Full Grebille! Mine, I tell you all dat afore its found out!"

"Yes! a *long way* afore it's found out!" said Cybele, dryly. "So long, I misdoubts we'll lib to see it!"

"Berry well, den! Now I tell you more—how I is gwine to be hired to her for a lady maid, an' gwine to go along of her an' de colonel to Europe!"

"To *which?*" inquired Uncle Saturn.

"To Europe!"

"What dat?"

"What Europe? I 'spises dese country bred niggers' ignorance!"

"Come, now. You's only been one voyage roun' de world, an' you puts on airs! Bet any thing you don't know no more 'bout Europe dan we do!"

"Don't I? Why, it's a great city bigger dan New Orleans, out yonder, beyant Washington, dere's what it is, an' where it is; which I am going dere myself as lady maid to Mrs. Full Grebille, when she an' de colonel goes onto deir bridal tower!"

"Bridle—*which?*"

"Bridal tower, you ignorant-ramus! An' 'sides which, I'm not agoin' to demean myself no more with wearin' no calico gowns and banana turbins; but I shall have a black silk dress and a little lace cap, trimmed wid pink satin ribbon, like Missus Courting Grebille's lady maid, Mammysell Sillystone!"

"Whee—ew!" commented the old negro, taking his pipe from his mouth, and letting off a thin, spiral curl of smoke.

"Uncle Satan! you's intoxicated, sar!"

"I's *which?*"



"Intoxified."

"Do you mean drunk?"

"I beleibs dat what de vulgar call de state you's in."

"Go 'way from here, gall; I neber was drunk in my life!" said the old man, good-humoredly, knocking the ashes out of his pipe.

"You is! which it's no wonder, long as you can't leave de wine glasses be; but must allus drain dry ebery singly glass as it come outen de dinin'-room; a mixin' all up togeder—port, an' clary, an' shampain, an' sherry, an' my-deary, an' all!"

"Well! dey's all good; an' one set off anoder, jes as de whites ob your eyes sets off de black ob your skin, *my deary*," grinned the old man.

"Mr. Satan 'Gregor, sar, I scorns to 'ply to you! I's a lady maid, an' 'clines to keep comp'ny wid de like ob *you*!" said Venus, throwing up her head and walking with great dignity from the kitchen.

"Whee—ew! what long whiskers our pussy cat has got!" cried Uncle Saturn, blowing a whif of tobacco smoke after her.

But Venus did not boast in vain. Astrea, in her reviving fortunes, remembered the faithful, humble friend of her adversity.

One day, while Mrs. Greville, Astrea, Lois, and Ettie were setting at work together in the parlor, the first-mentioned said to the second:

"Astrea, love, I wish to do something to prove my affection for you! What shall it be?"

"Dear Mrs. Greville, that which is so evident does not want proof. I shall never doubt your love," replied Astrea.

"Then to put the meaning in other words, I wish to add to your happiness. In what manner can I do so?"

"Kindest of friends, I was about to say that nothing but the presence of my husband and my guardian *could* add to



my happiness, but that would not be true; there is another circumstance that would delight me."

"Name it, my love!"

"The possession of Venus! She was the only friend I had in the darkest days of my captivity—my friend from the moment I first opened my eyes in the pirate ship to the moment she came to summon me to your presence! And such a friend! She had no liberty to lose, poor woman; but she risked her life and even her soul for me; and——" here Astrea hesitated and blushed.

"And what, my dear, what would you have?"

"I would like to purchase Venus of you; oh, forgive me! I know I am rude, but then I wish to have Venus always with me! It would grieve me deeply to part with dear Venus."

"You shall have her, my love! and no doubt she will be a treasure to you! for between mistress and maid, the tie of affection is every thing!"

And so saying Mrs. Greville, who was prompt in all her acts, arose and went into the next room where Welby Dunbar sat writing at a table. She held a whispered conversation with him for a few minutes, and then returned to her circle of daughters, and entered upon a new subject of conversation.

That night, when Astrea retired to her room, she saw upon her dressing table a large envelope directed to her. Upon examining its contents, she found a deed of gift transferring Venus from the possession of Mrs. Greville to herself. Astrea's act followed quick upon that of Mrs. Greville. The next morning, directly after breakfast, she spoke to Welby Dunbar, saying:

"Will you do me a favor?"

"Any thing in the world!"

"Then please draw up a deed of manumission for the woman named in this document," she said, placing the deed of gift in his hands. He smiled, and placing his hand in



the breast pocket of his coat, drew a folded parchment out, saying :

"You perceive that I foresaw you would make this request, and anticipated it! Here are the 'free papers,' as the negroes call them. Your signature only is wanted!"

"Oh, hand me a pen!" exclaimed Astrea, hurriedly.

He put one in her hand, and laid the document open before her. She hastily affixed her signature, and then took up the parchment, and with her childish eagerness ran into her bedroom, where Venus lingered, after having arranged it for the day.

"Venus! dear Venus! here are your free papers! here! here!" and she eagerly thrust the packet into the woman's hand.

"My free papers!" repeated Venus, bewildered by the suddenness of the transaction.

"Yes, yes, Venus! You are a free woman, now; you belong to no one but yourself! You can come and go as you please! You can leave me when you like!"

"Oh, honey! I mean, madam! would you turn me loose, now, to be made a mock of, by de niggers, arter me braggin' to dem as how I was a-goin' to be your lady maid?" whined Venus.

"No, no; I never wish to part with you, Venus!"

"Den why say it?"

"Only to inform you, Venus, that you possess the power of going wherever you please. If you like to remain with me, I will gladly engage you as my own maid!"

"Dere! I knowed it! I said it! I telled 'em all so! Dere was a prophecye in my soul as how I'd lib to see myself a lady maid, an' wear black silk dresses an' little lace caps!" exclaimed Venus, more delighted at her office than at her freedom.

"I am happy, Venus, to be the means of realizing to you your day-dream," said Astrea, smiling.

"'Twa'nt no dream, honey; 'cause dreams allus goes con-



trary-wise! no, indeed! It was all my own thoughts, honey—Mrs. Full Grebille, I should say.”

“Venus, I have a request to make of you.”

“What dat, chile?—Mrs. Full Grebille, I mean.”

“It is that you will continue to call me child and honey, as before. Love and its pet names are much dearer to my heart than pride and its titles.”

“So it is to mine, honey, an’ a heap more nateral too.”

“Now, then, Venus, as you are to be my attendant, and go with me to the North, you will want an outfit. Here, then, is fifty dollars, your first half year’s wages in advance,” said Astrea, putting a purse in the woman’s hand.

“Lor’, chile, I didn’t ax for no wages to wait on *you*, I’d wait on you free-hearted for nothing, sake o’ being ’long o’ you. ’Sides, what I gwine do wid all dis here goold?”

“Buy clothes, Venus.”

“Hi, honey, Mrs. Courting Grebille done give me all that great big chist full o’ finery as used to b’long to poor Lulu—more clothes dan would las’ me half my life! So what I gwine do wid all dis money?”

“Put it away and save it then, Venus, as the first fruits of your free labor.”

“I keep it for your sake den, chile. I put it in de bot-tom o’ my chist, an’ I look at it, an’ think o’ you! An’ now, honey, may I go an’ tell ole Aunt Cybele an’ ole Uncle Satan?”

“Certainly,” answered Astrea, smiling.

Venus ran all the way out of the house across the yard and into the kitchen, holding her free papers at arms’ length. And when she got into the presence of the old negroes, she waved them derisively in their faces, exclaiming:

“Dere! what I tell you? You has lib see it, hasn’t you? Dem’s de f’ee papers!”

“Lor! Now I ’spose, cause you owns yourself, you thinks you has got somefin great. Sho! you won’t think



so when you fines you has got to keep yourself for better for worser, for richer for poorer, in healf an' in sickness, now I tell you! It's a ser'us thing to have to s'port yourself, an' dat you'll fine, gall!" said old Cybele.

"Ay, will you," chimed in old Saturn.

"Sour grapes!" cried Venus, as she flung herself out of the kitchen and went to overhaul Lulu's chest and prepare some finery. And that same afternoon Venus blossomed out in her robes of office—a black silk dress, a little white muslin apron, a tiny lace cap perched upon the back of her head, and her front hair drawn out and pulled until it was made to part over her forehead and lie down on each temple, like "Mammysells Sillystones," for it was the highest ambition of Venus to imitate and excel the toilettes of Mademoiselle Celestine.

When, however, poor Venus first paraded her new style of dress among her fellow-servants, her appearance, instead of eliciting the burst of admiration she confidently expected, provoked an explosion of laughter, which she immediately resented. As for the French maid, she looked at Venus in her new apparel with the same sort of amused curiosity with which she would have examined a monkey in full dress. And this Venus took for a compliment.

The family were anxiously awaiting news from the North. Mrs. Courtney Greville had constituted herself Astrea's banker. And to help to pass away the tediousness of the time of waiting, Mrs. Greville took her whole party to New Orleans to spend a week. Astrea took advantage of their visit to the city to procure a proper and becoming outfit.



## CHAPTER LX.

## HOPE DEFERRED.

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time ;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusky death!—*Shakespeare.*

MEANWHILE, at Fuljoy's Isle, in Maryland, nothing was as yet known, or suspected, of the events transpiring at the Old Plantation House in Louisiana.

From the time that Mr. Dunbar had left the neighborhood, for the purpose of inserting advertisements in the city papers offering a munificent reward for the discovery of the missing lady, the friends of Astrea had passed their days in the slow heart wasting of "hope deferred." Every week they had received letters from Welby Dunbar reporting no progress toward discovery. Once Madame de Glacie had got from Mrs. Greville a letter of condolence inviting her to come to New York. This invitation had been gratefully declined. Upon another occasion, Colonel Greville had received from his step-mother a letter full of sympathy. This he answered in the spirit in which it was written. At last Captain Fuljoy got a little note from Ettie Burns, announcing her safe arrival in New York, and also the immediate departure of the whole family for New Orleans. The same mail brought a letter from Mr. Dunbar to Madame de Glacie confirming the news, and assuring her that he should take advantage of this journey to prosecute the search for her lost daughter.

Since these last two letters the friends of Astrea had heard nothing more from their attorney or his party. Captain Fuljoy, with the patient endurance of righteous old age, tried to bear up under this protracted anguish of sus-



pense; but his friends perceived with sorrow that he failed every day.

Colonel Greville, with the elasticity of youth, struggled long against the fatal effects of imprisonment and despair; but at last he also succumbed to their power, and rapidly wasted away.

Only Madame de Glacie, with the hope that "springs eternal," in a woman's breast at least, and the prophetic vision of a mother's soul, kept up her spirits, and foretold the final success of the search. She went frequently from one of the sufferers to the other to cheer them up.

Meanwhile, some modification of public opinion was going on. Some weeks had passed since the "tragedy at Fuljoy's Isle," as the events of the bridal day there had been called, and the community had had time to recover from the first effects of their surprise, horror, and indignation. The guilt of Colonel Greville was no longer a matter of unquestionable fact with everybody. Many seriously doubted his criminality. The conduct of Captain Fuljoy and the Marquise de Glacie, also had a good effect upon public sentiment. *They* did not believe Colonel Greville to be the murderer, or that any murder had been committed. On the contrary, they held their son-in-law in the highest possible esteem and affection, and they were convinced that the lost bride had been abducted by certain other parties. So, the good people of the country looked forward to the approaching trial as the only means by which they would ever be able to get the truth of this mysterious affair.

The day of the trial arrived. From an early hour in the morning the court room was crowded by an eager audience. Judge Pemberton presided. At ten o'clock the prisoner, pale and haggard from long imprisonment and severe anxiety, and clothed in the gloomy habiliments of mourning, was led into court. By his side, to sustain him by their presence, walked Madame de Glacie and Captain Fuljoy. This excited a buzz of conversation among the spectators.



"Surely," it was whispered, "he cannot be guilty, or the mother and the guardian of the girl he is supposed to have murdered would not be here in attendance upon him."

"And look! how affectionate their manner is to him!"

"This will have its effect upon the jury, in spite of all!"

Meanwhile, the prisoner and his party advanced through the court. In that primitive country court room, there was no regular dock. The prisoner was accommodated with a chair in front of the bench, and among his own counsel. His manner was composed and dignified, but deeply sorrowful. Madame de Glacie and Captain Fuljoy seated themselves—the one on his right hand, the other on his left.

Madame de Glacie put her hand in his, and looked affectionately upon him from time to time.

Captain Fuljoy sat back, with his hands resting upon the gold-headed cane that stood between his knees, his broad chest expanded, and his gray head erect, looking defiance at the court.

Occasionally the counsel of the prisoner came and exchanged a word with one or the other of the group.

And thus they remained while the preliminaries of the trial were arranged.

In criminal trials, in some cases, the evidence is so clear against the prisoner, that every one surely predicts his conviction; in others, it is so obscure that every one as surely anticipates his acquittal. And in neither of these cases is much anxiety felt by the public at large; for they think that they know the result of the trial in advance.

But there is a third class of cases, where the evidence is of that questionable character, in which it might be pre-vised that a harsh jury would convict, or a lenient one acquit the prisoner.

Of this class was the case of Colonel Greville. The circumstances that could be proved against him were so grave as to excite the most serious fears of his conviction should his jury happen to be a severe one; while the rebutting testimony that could be brought forward in his favor was



so strong as to raise the most lively hopes of his acquittal should his jury chance to be a charitable one. The effect of this uncertainty was to fill the minds of his friends with the deepest anxiety, and those of the public with the most eager curiosity.

The preliminary arrangements being completed, the prisoner was arraigned in the usual manner, and pleaded, of course, "Not Guilty."

"No, I'll be d—— (I was going to say) if he is!" exclaimed Captain Fuljoy, bringing down his gold-headed stick with an emphatic thump.

The crier called "Order!" and the business of the trial proceeded.

The State's attorney arose to open the indictment. He stood up with an air of modest assurance, of deferential confidence. His opening address was intended to be one of the finest specimens of forensic eloquence ever yet heard. He cleared his throat, looked around upon the spectators, down upon the prisoner, over to the jury box, up to the bench, and commenced:

"Your honor and gentlemen of the jury! it becomes my painful duty to——"

"*Cast your e'e o'er this wee bit writing,*" said the Scotch bailiff, thrusting into his hands a folded paper that had been sent by the sheriff, who at this crisis entered the court room.

The State's attorney looked surprised and annoyed at the untimely interruption; but catching the eye of the sheriff, who was making his way through the crowded room toward the bench, and deeming a paper despatched by him at that moment of some importance, he frowningly opened and read the contents.

The effect was marked. His face flushed up, he glanced quickly at the messenger, at the prisoner, at the jury, and then, with a short bow to the bench, turned suddenly and hastened to meet the sheriff, who was still slowly advancing through the crowd.



The eyes of the whole assembly were upon the two. That something unusual had happened, or was about to happen, every one knew. The crowd fell back to facilitate the meeting of the two men.

The prisoner and his party watched these proceedings with curiosity and interest. To the despairing every event brings hope—for their condition, that cannot be made worse, may be made better. Therefore it was with a vague hope that this nearly hopeless group gazed upon the meeting of the State's attorney and the sheriff.

The two last mentioned were now talking together in low, eager tones. After a short interview, they both advanced toward the bench, and the State's attorney spoke:

“Your Honor, I beg leave to withdraw the charge against the prisoner at the bar, and enter a *Nolle Prosequi*. I hold in my hand an official despatch from the Mayor of New Orleans, announcing that the missing lady, Astrea Greville, is alive and well——”

He was interrupted.

With great cries of joy the prisoner and his friends started up, and threw themselves into each other's arms! The contagion spread. The audience was in a state of irrepressible excitement.

There are crises in life when time, place, and conventional proprieties are all carried away in the tide of overwhelming emotion. For some moments no one thought to call the crowd to order. Nature had to take her way. Meanwhile the judge was reading the official despatch. At length he spoke to the crier, who called out in a loud voice that rose above all the noise in the room:

“Silence in the court while his Honor gives judgment!”

And silence fell like a spell upon the crowd. The judge then arose, and spoke:

“The prisoner is discharged from custody, and the court is adjourned.” And having said this, he descended from the bench, and warmly shook hands with Colonel Greville and Captain Fuljoy.



The sheriff at the same moment came up, and placed the despatch in Colonel Greville's hands, saying:

"This document contains information about your wife which will be most interesting to her friends; but with which the public at large have so little to do, that his Honor deemed it unnecessary to have it read aloud in open court; the bare fact of her existence, proved before the authorities at New Orleans, being cause sufficient to justify your immediate discharge. Here is the paper; and pray accept with it my warmest congratulations."

"And mine also! though you have disappointed me of delivering one of the finest speeches I ever penned. However, it will do quite as well, with a little alteration, for the next case," said the State's attorney.

"Thanks! thanks! But oh, tell me, is my wife really well and safe?"

"Yes; read for yourself."

Other friends were now crowding around Colonel Greville with congratulations, that might have occupied him for the next three hours, had not Captain Fuljoy interfered by saying:

"Gentlemen, Madame de Glacie is in need of repose and refreshment after all this fatigue and excitement. Permit us to take leave of you and attend her from the court room."

And with a deep bow the gallant old sailor took leave of his friends, gave his arm to Madame de Glacie, and led her forth. Colonel Greville attended them, followed by the good wishes of all his friends.

They walked back to the inn, where Captain Fuljoy and the Marquise de Glacie had taken lodgings. And after a slight refreshment, during which Captain Fuljoy's carriage was brought around, they set out for the island; only to spend one night, however.

That afternoon and evening was employed in hasty preparations for their journey.

The next morning they hoisted the red flag, to telegraph the Busy Bee as she passed; took their passage upon her,



and in due time arrived at Baltimore, and set out by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for St. Louis, where they embarked upon the steamboat "Southern Queen" for New Orleans.

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## CHAPTER LXI.

### ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Ah, loveliest, if the measure of thy joy  
Be heaped like mine, and that thy skill be more  
To emblazon it, then sweeten with thy breath  
This neighbor air, and let rich man's tongue  
Unfold the imagined happiness, that both  
Receive in either, by this dear encounter.—*Shakespeare.*

It was a glorious afternoon in early autumn. Mrs. Greville and her family had returned to the old plantation house, and were now out upon the front piazza to enjoy the cool and balmy air of evening, and gaze upon the golden refulgence of the setting sun and the silvery radiance of the rising moon. The softness of the hour and the beauty of the scene inclined them all to a luxurious pensiveness.

Lois and Welby arose and walked side by side, slowly up and down the lawn in front of the piazza, talking in a low tone, and doubtlessly discussing their future prospects. Mrs. Greville reclined in an easy chair, and Ettie Burns sat upon a cushion at her feet. Mrs. Greville's white and jewelled fingers were straying idly among the shining black ringlets of Ettie's little head, as it lay lazily upon her lap.

Astrea sat apart at one end of the piazza, absorbed in reverie. Astrea was now, perhaps, more beautiful than she had ever been in her life before. Her complexion was blooming with health, her eyes beaming with hope, her hair clustering in short bright curls around her brow, which was fair as snow. She wore a dress of fresh rose-colored barege, trimmed with fine lace, and a necklace of pearls encircled her throat. She was occupied with thoughts too



happy and too sacred to be shared with any one. Therefore she sat apart in silence. She was daily expecting the arrival of her husband, her guardian, and "last, but not least," the mother with whose existence she had been but so recently made acquainted. She had been thus expecting them for several days; but expectation had not as yet had time to become anxiety. She was even now anticipating their arrival on this very evening.

Her happy reverie was at length interrupted by Venus, who, since she had been raised to the dignity of "lady maid," had diligently performed the duties of her office. Venus now came out resplendent in a silver-gray silk dress, a white muslin apron trimmed with embroidery, and a lace cap, with cherry-colored satin ribbons flying a yard and a half behind her. She held in her hand a fan of marabout feathers, which, with an air of much importance, she offered to her mistress.

But just at this moment a sound of carriage wheels drew every one's attention from Venus and her graces.

Mrs. Greville pushed Ettie's little black head almost abruptly from her lap, as she arose to look out.

Lois and Welby paused in their walk and talk, and gazed up the avenue.

Astrea started from her seat and fixed her eyes with devouring interest upon the approaching carriage.

It was a very capacious carriage, drawn by two strong horses, and having much luggage piled up behind and on top of it. As it drew near they saw that it contained a lady, an old gentleman and a young one. There could be no mistaking the party!

"They have come! They have come!" exclaimed Astrea, in the clear, ringing tones of joy, nearly upsetting Venus and her streamers, as she sprung past and flew out to meet her friends.

In another moment the carriage had drawn up, Colonel Greville had alighted, and Astrea was folded in the arms of her husband. Great joy like great sorrow has but one



vent—tears! Astrea burst into a flood of tears, and sobbed convulsively upon his bosom.

And while Colonel Greville held her there, murmuring inarticulate words of love and comfort; and while Captain Fuljoy and Madame de Glacie impatiently awaited their own turn to be kissed and cried over, Mrs. Greville advanced with an open hand and smiling face to receive her guests.

Captain Fuljoy shook hands with his old acquaintance, complimented her on her youth and beauty, and then begged leave to present his friend, Madame de Glacie.

Mrs. Greville greeted the foreign lady with great cordiality, took her affectionately by the hand and led her up to the piazza.

Then Ettie Burns sprang forward, exclaiming:

“And now I won’t wait a minute longer for anybody! Here I am, Captain Fuljoy! here is your own little Ettie again. You know I couldn’t live without you, and that is the reason you have come!”

The old sailor, smiling broadly, raised Ettie in his arms and kissed her, saying:

“If it had not been for you, Astrea might never have been found.”

“No, I am worth ten attornies, am I not?”

Meanwhile Colonel Greville, having breathed many tender words into the ears of his wife and dried her tears, now whispered:

“My sweet Astrea, here is your mother waiting so patiently to embrace you! Turn to her, dearest!”

And Astrea, with a vivid blush, withdrew herself from the arms of her husband, and sank into the outstretched ones of her mother, exclaiming:

“Mother, dearest mother, it is deep joy to meet you! Oh, do not think that your child is unloving, or undutiful, because—because——”

“Because she first saw only her husband! I do not, my darling. I remember your father, Astrea. And now, my child, here is another who is longing to greet you—one who



has filled a parent's place in your life, and to whom half your filial love and duty is due," said the lady, gently lifting her daughter's head, and directing her attention to Captain Fuljoy.

"Ah, my dear guardian! my dear, dear guardian! did you think I could forget you for an instant!" exclaimed Astrea, turning to him.

The old sailor received and pressed her to his great heart, murmuring:

"No, my little Daney! I feel always sure that while you live you will love the old man. God bless you, my child! God love you!"

Mrs. Courtney Greville advanced with a smile and offered her hand to her step-son, saying:

"After all these years of misapprehension and estrangement, my dear Fulke, I am happy to believe that we are friends at last."

"Forever, my dear Madam!" answered Colonel Greville, raising her hand to his lips.

Mrs. Greville then led the way into the house, and ordered her servants to attend her guests to their several chambers.

When the latter had changed their travelling dresses, they re-assembled in the front parlor, where the tea-table was spread.

Here they were joined by Welby Dunbar, who was, for the first time, presented to his counterpart, Fulke Greville. The meeting of these two men, whose accidental resemblance to each other was so great, called up first a look of wonder upon each face, and then a burst of laughter from each pair of lungs, which was caught up and echoed by the whole circle.

"You do not wonder now at the great mistake of years, Fulke?" inquired Mrs. Courtney Greville.

"No," laughed the Colonel.

"I tell you what, maiden aunt," said Ettie Burns, "you will have to tie a badge upon Uncle Welby's arm, so as to distinguish your sweetheart from Astrea's husband!"



"I shall trust to no such device, Ettie! He might easily get rid of that! No, I shall do better than that! I shall have an iron collar, with the owner's name on it, soldered around his neck."

"Capital," said Ettie, clapping her hands with glee; "and be sure to add this line: 'I'm Lois Howard's dog; whose dog are you?'"

"Ettie!" said Mrs. Courtney Greville, severely.

"Splendid grandmamma, if you scold me before folks, I'll—*eat fish with a knife!*"

This produced another peal of laughter, for people are easily amused when they are happy.

"You are quite incorrigible, Ettie," said the lady. But her rebuke was lost in the sounds of mirth, amid which they all gathered around the tea-table.

After tea there were mutual explanations. Astrea was called upon to relate her adventures for the satisfaction of her husband, mother, and guardian. She softened as much as possible her story of wrong and suffering, yet it was heard with the deepest grief and indignation. To chase away the gloomy feelings left by Astrea's narrative, Welby Dunbar was requested to relate his experience as a fish boy. His story had the effect of a farce following a melo-drama. Peals of laughter greeted his description of his arrest for the crime of oyster-crying; his trial by the court of school-masters; and his condemnation to wealth for life!

The happiness in the parlor spread to the kitchen.

Upon the strength of it, old Aunt Cybele roasted some apples, and old Uncle Saturn made a bowl of apple-toddy.

Venus condescended to sip a little.

But poor Sam! Ever since Venus had cast her shell, and fluttered forth such a "splendiferous" butterfly, poor Sam had been taken in and almost done for! Like the humblest spaniel, he had followed her about, watching her, waiting on her, fetching and carrying for her, worshipping her, and yet never daring so much as to breathe his admiration.



But upon this auspicious evening, when his heart was merry with the contagious merriment of the family, when his soul was valiant with apple-toddy, and his head was turned by his charmer's silver-gray dress and cherry-colored streamers, he took advantage of the first moment that he happened to be left alone with Venus, popped down on both his knees before her, clasped his hands, turned up the whites of his eyes, and prayed to her to marry him immediately, because he could not wait!

Venus was outrageous. She cast upon him an annihilating look, exclaiming:

"Go 'way from here, nigger! You done took leave o' your woolly head senses, ain't you? Who's you a talkin' to, sar? I'll hab you to know, sar, I'm a lady maid. And do you think when I can be a lady maid, and wear fine clothes, and wait on Mrs. Full Grebille, who is a beautiful young lady, as how I'm a gwine to demean *myself* wid getting married, to be a slave to a great big ugly man? 'Deed you *is* sick if you think dat!"

How much more scorn Venus might have poured out upon her unlucky admirer can never be known, had not Aunt Cybele and Uncle Saturn just then returned to the kitchen. They caught sight of Sam just as he sprang up from his knees.

"Hi, what de matter long 'o *he*?" cried the old man.

"Hey! what Sam been a doin' of?" asked the old woman.

"Sayin' of his prayers! He turned *good* all of a sudden," said Venus, with a toss of her head, as she left the kitchen, to light up her mistress's bedroom.

Meanwhile, in the parlor, the mutual explanations having all been made, and laughed at or cried over to their heart's content, our party of reunited friends freely discussed their future plans.

Captain Fuljoy and Colonel Greville wished to return immediately to Fuljoy's Isle, where, in the bosom of her family, Astrea might enjoy that complete repose which the excitements of her late life seemed to render so advisable.



But at length they yielded to the entreaties of Mrs. Greville, and consented to wait to be present at the marriage of Welby Dunbar and Lois Howard, which was to be celebrated on the first of the ensuing month.

With this agreement, they separated for the night.

According to the programme, on the first of October Welby and Lois were married. Upon account of recent events, the wedding was a very quiet one. The ceremony was performed at ten o'clock in the morning, in the drawing-room of the old plantation house. The Reverend Mr. Palmer officiated; Ettie Burns was the only bridesmaid; Captain Fuljoy was the groomsman; Colonel Greville gave away the bride; and Mrs. Courtney Greville presided at the marriage breakfast that followed, and at which only the members of the family and the officiating clergyman were present.

Immediately after breakfast, the *really* "happy pair" set out in a handsome travelling carriage for New Orleans, whence they intended to take the first steamer for Demerara. The reason of this was, that they had exhausted the old world, or at least grown tired of it; and it was too late in the autumn to think of carrying out their first purpose of travelling through Canada; so they had determined, by way of a change, to make a tour of South America.

At most weddings there is only one person to be deeply pitied—the bride's mother, left at home. Ah, no matter how prosperously she may have married off her daughter, or how well she may like her son-in-law, it is all the same! Out from the door, with her departing daughter, has gone her heart—and her bosom is emptied of its life!

Mrs. Courtney Greville was a practised woman of the world. Smilingly she had looked upon the marriage rites, and presided at the wedding breakfast. Smilingly she had received the parting embrace of Welby, and kissed Lois, who was also smiling through her tears—like a burst of sunshine through April rain.

But when the carriage had rolled away, and she had re-



turned to the desolate house, she sank down into the nearest chair, overcome, pallid, gasping—too agonized for tears—her wrung bosom only making this low moan :

“ Oh, pitying Saviour ! how much, from first to last, even the happiest mother must suffer ! ”

Old Captain Fuljoy heard and saw all this, and—could not stand it ! He seized his hat and exclaimed :

“ I’ll go and fetch ’em back—I’ll saddle Saladin and ride after ’em ! I’ll overtake ’em before they get to the toll-gate ! I’ll make ’em turn the horses’ heads and come right home again ! I won’t have it ! D—— (I was going to say)—this way of making everybody else miserable because *they* are happy ! ”

“ Stay ! you would not do such a thing ! You must not, not for the world ! They must do what society requires of them—a bridal tour is an imperative necessity. This is nothing but morbid feeling in me—a weakness that I must shake off. Lois and Welby, the beings dearest to me in the world, are happy ; and I will be happy ! ” said Mrs. Greville, rising, and dropping her grief as she might have dropped her black mantle.

“ That is right, splendid grandmamma ! paleness doesn’t become your complexion at all ! ” said Ettie.

“ My poor little pet ! you also will be leaving me some day. ”

“ Never, splendid gradmamma ! not for all the husbands in the world—oh ! I mean unless my dear old captain asks me. I would not refuse *him*—no, indeed, indeed, wouldn’t I ! ” said Ettie, earnestly.

“ There, Captain Fuljoy, you have had an offer ! ” smiled Mrs. Greville.

“ Yes, and from the dearest little darling in the world. But, Ettie, my child, I am already married, although you don’t know it—I have a wife in Heaven ! She has been waiting for me there these many years. And besides, Ettie dear, I am above eighty years old ; that is at least sixty years too old for you ; and it would be a great wrong for



me to take you at your word," replied the honest old sailor, who evidently took Ettie's offer very seriously.

"That is a pity, now, for I shall be an old maid!" she said.

This little badinage made a diversion of Mrs. Courtney Greville's ideas, so that she did not fall into dejection again that day.

And the next day she had business enough to occupy her thoughts. Captain Fuljoy and his party had decided to stay at the old plantation house with Mrs. Greville until she had settled up the business that had brought her to the South, and then the whole party were to go together to the North, and Mrs. Greville was to remain their guest at Fuljoy's Island until the return of her son and daughter, when the three last named would proceed to New York and take up their residence at the house in Madison Square. Welby Dunbar, previous to his marriage and departure, had put his mother's affairs in such good train that little remained to be done. The plantation was sold; the negroes upon the estate were emancipated; those who were willing to emigrate, were sent to Liberia; those who were disabled by age or sickness, were provided for; Uncle Saturn and Aunt Cybele were made happy with a cottage, a garden, a cow, and some poultry; and those who wished to remain in the neighborhood to get their own living, were recommended to good employers. All but Sam! That luckless lover could not make up his chaotic mind to any measure. To use Uncle Saturn's expression for this perverse course—"Sam would neither gee, woa, nor come hither!" The last day of their stay at the old plantation house came—they were to depart the next morning. Driven to desperation, Sam was also goaded to action—he followed the old captain until he found him alone, and then, going down on both his knees, with clasped hands, and upraised eyes, and streaming tears, he said:

"Cap'n Full-ob-joy, sar, have massy on me, who is full ob grief! I knows how you're a tender-hearted gem'n an' wouldn't like to see me hung up by de neck till I is dead!"



"What the d—l (I was going to say) have you done to get yourself hung, you wretched boy?" asked the captain, in alarm.

"Nuffin, sar; I is in lub wid Wenus! An' ef I don't get Wenus, I shall hang myse'f on de fus' tree I can fine!"

"Oh! that's it! Well, my poor boy, what can I do for you?" inquired the kind old man, whose heart was open to the humblest or absurdest cry of distress.

"Oh, Marse Cap'n! sar, I does want to go along o' Wenus so bad! an' ef you would only take me along as your servant, sar, I wouldn't want no wages, sar, nor no nuffin; but only to be along o' Wenus! My life lay in Wenus, sar, 'deed it do, an' ef Wenus go, my life go!"

"Well, does Venus like you?"

"No, sar; not as yet! 'pears like she hates me on de yeth; she can't bide de sight o' me!"

"Then, why the d—l (I was going to say) do you run after her? Let her go; and you look after some other girl."

"Oh, Marse Cap'n, sar, 'taint no use, sar! Dere aint no gall in de whole country as wear *sich* caps an' *sich* ribbins as Wenus wear! An' my life lay in her, sar!"

"In her caps, you mean, you great blockhead! She set her caps at you! what captivating caps they must be, to be sure!"

"Dey *is*, sar; dey *jes is*! an' likewise de red ribbins—which dey is sometimes rosy an' sometimes cherry; an' den de little white ap'ons, an' de balorals, an' oh, de lace'-up boots! When I thinks of 'em all, an' how dere a-goin' to leabe me, I has a chokin' in my t'roat! Oh, marse, for massy sake, *don't* 'fuse me ob going along o' Wenus."

"But what is the use of your going with Venus if she won't look at you?"

"Oh, sar, 'cause I knows, how ef I *keeps on a-keepin' on*, she can't hold out forever! If I don't get tired and stop, she'll have to turn an' give in! An' if so be you will only



take me as your sarvent, an' I libs in de same family wid her, I *will* keep on, an' I *won't* get tired, nor likewise stop till I get her——”

“And her *caps*! Well, my boy, such an earnest lover as yourself should be encouraged. And though I have got as many servants at home as I can possibly employ, yet—well, yes, I will take you, also.”

“'Loramity bless you, sar! Now, den, I shall get Wenus, I'll be shot if I don't!” cried Sam, jumping up, beside himself with joy.

Shortly after this happy arrangement of Sam's with the captain, the whole party set out for the North, and in due time, after the usual vicissitudes of travel, arrived safe and well at Fuljoy's Island, where they were in a couple of months joined by Welby and Lois, who returned healthy and happy from their South American trip.

Early in the New Year, Mrs. Courtney Greville and Mr. and Mrs. Welby Dunbar returned to their home in New York.

Upon their arrival they met an important event. A pirate had been captured after a sharp action with one of our sloops-of-war, in which most of her crew had been killed. Her captain, who was severely wounded, had been brought into port and lodged in the Tombs, to await his trial. Welby Dunbar was solicited to defend him, but he declined the brief. This man, who proved to be Merrick, the slaver captain, soon afterward died of his wounds in the prison. Before death he made a full confession, disclosing both his crimes and his confederates. Among the crimes he mentioned his first abduction of Astrea de Glacie as an infant, in which he was assisted by the Marquis de Glacie and the Irish Druries; and his second abduction of Astrea Greville, the bride, in which he was assisted by the French actress Victorine and his own pirate crew. His confession led to the eventual apprehension and punishment of all these malefactors, with the exception of the Marquis de Glacie, who escaped the gallies by dying of diptheria.



After the demise of her brother-in-law, Madame de Glacie put all her estates situated in Italy and France into the hands of a responsible agent, and took up her permanent abode at Fuljoy's Island.

There Captain Fuljoy, Colonel Greville, Astrea, and Madame de Glacie live together, forming one united and happy family. Captain Fuljoy has purchased Burnstop, and assigned it as a residence to the two old maiden ladies, Miss Mehitable Powers and Miss Priscilla Pinchett, whom he has pensioned off. These two, being perfect opposites in every possible respect, fit well into each other's characters, and live together in great harmony. For instance, little Miss Pinchy loves to command, while big Miss Hit loves to obey. Miss Pinchy has a quick temper, Miss Hit a slow one; Miss Pinchy likes to stir about, Miss Hit to sit still; consequently, Miss Pinchy does the housekeeping, and Miss Hit the sewing; finally, Miss Pinchy likes to talk and Miss Hit to listen; therefore they agree so perfectly well that all who know them say that it is a great pity one had not been a man and the other a woman, so that they might have married, and set an example of conjugal harmony to the whole world.

But if this marriage cannot take place others can; for the very latest intelligence received from Fuljoy's Island announced that the constancy of Sam had conquered the coldness of Venus, and that they were to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony the coming Easter.

And the last letter from Mrs. Courtney Greville informed us of the engagement of Ettie Burns to a talented young lawyer, who is going into partnership with Welby Dunbar, who is pursuing his professional business with untiring industry and eminent success.



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
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
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
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
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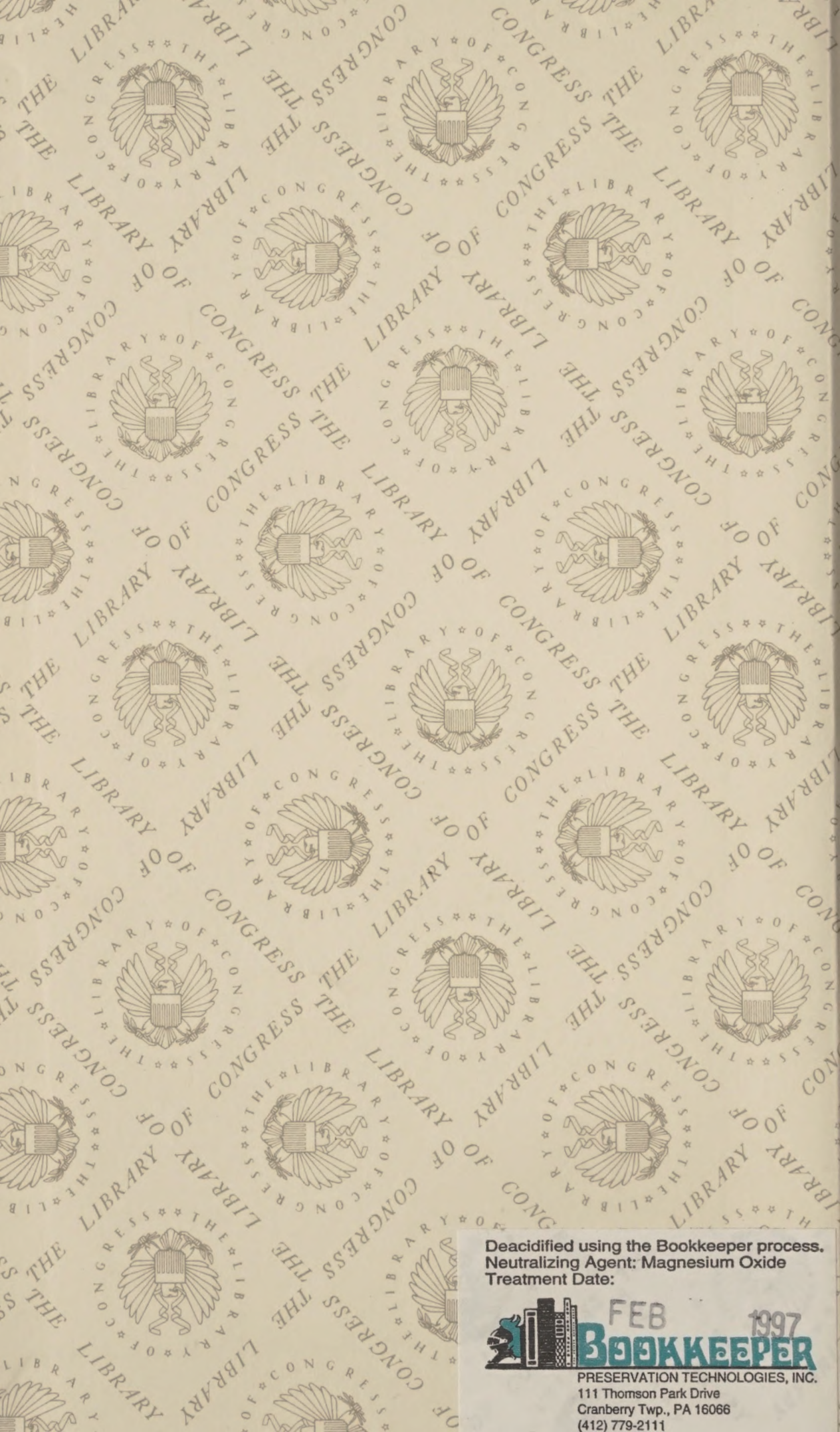




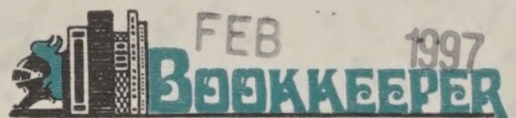






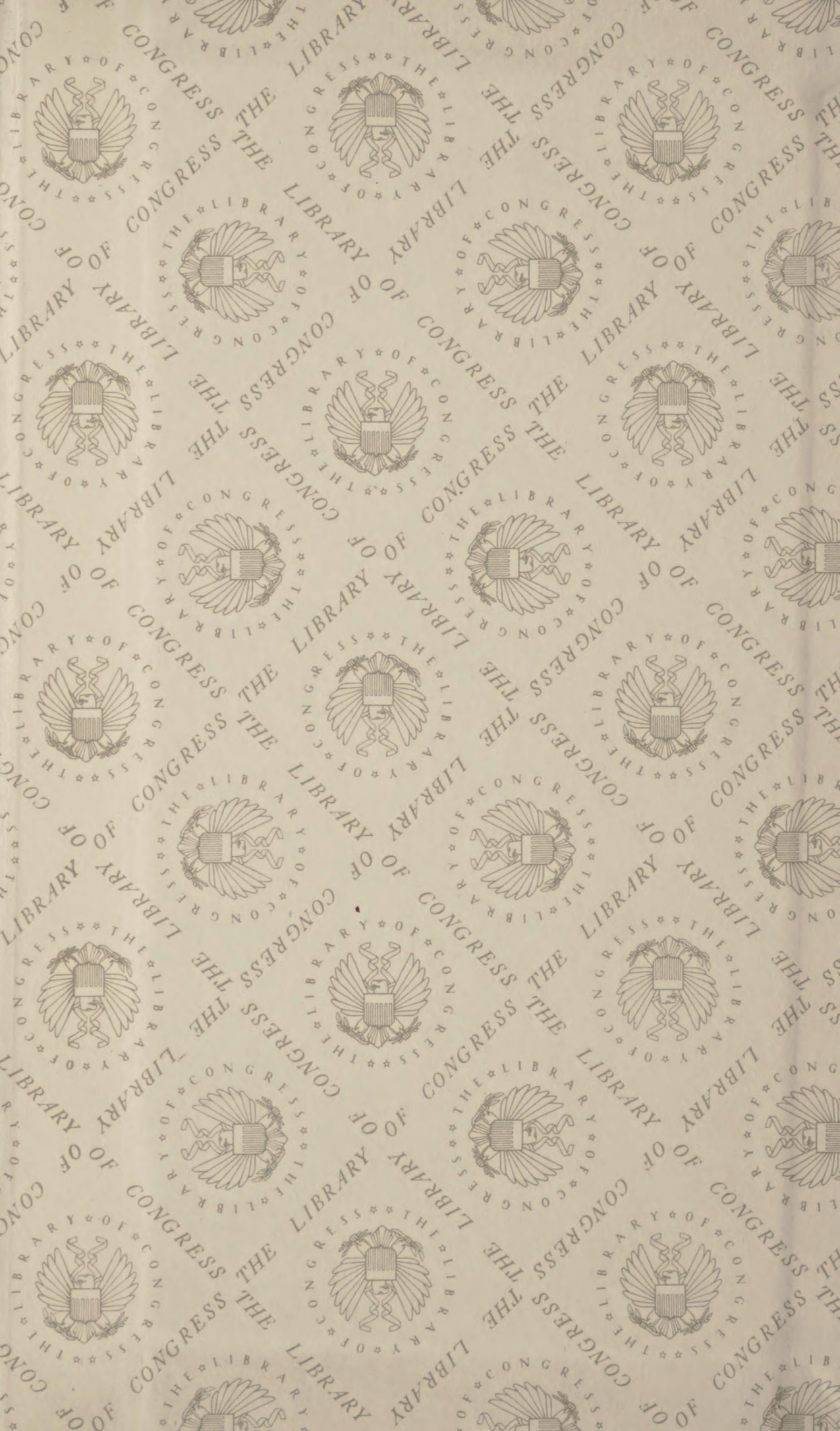


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